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THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

CONTAINING,

I.—EIGHT SERMONS.
II.—MISCELLANEOUS THEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.
III.—MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. VII.

I—EIGHT SERMONS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

Page

SERMON I.—Man's Natural Blindness in Religion, Psalm xciv. 8—11, - - - - - - - - - - 3
II.—Men Naturally God's Enemies, Romans v. 10, - - 31
III.—Wisdom displayed in Salvation, Ephesians iii. 10, - 66
IV.—Joseph's Temptation and Deliverance, Gen. xxxix. 12, 115
V.—The Christian Pilgrim, Hebrews xi. 13, 14, - - 135
VI.—God Glorified in Man's Dependance, 1 Cor. i. 29—31, 149
VII.—Sinners in the hands of an Angry God, Deut. xxxii. 35, 163
VIII.—The Watchman's Duty and Account, Heb. xiii. 17, - 178

II.—MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

Advertisement, - - - - - - - - - 198
Preface, - - - - - - - - - - - 199
PART I.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE FACTS AND EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE OBJECTIONS OF INFIDELS, - 201
CHAPTER I.—General Observations, - - - - - *ibid*
II.—The Objection concerning the Apostles' apprehensions of the Second Coming of Christ, answered, - - 221
III.—Jesus' Prophecies, a proof that he was the Christ, and a Divine Person, - - - - - - - - - 228
IV.—The Propriety of a General Judgment, and a Future State, - - - - - - - - - - - 233
V.—The Miracles of Jesus not counterfeited by his Enemies, and superior to those of the Old Testament, - - 240
VI.—Observations on the Scriptures, - - - - - 244
VII.—The Insufficiency of Reason as a substitute for Revelation, - - - - - - - - - - - 261
VIII.—On the Medium of Moral Government, - - - 277
IX.—Mahometanism compared with Christianity, - - 298
X.—The Jewish Nation a standing evidence of the truth of Revealed Religion, - - - - - - - - 303
PART II.—OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE MYSTERIES OF SCRIPTURE, - - - - - - - - - - 310
PART III.—OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE DEITY OF CHRIST, - - - - - - - - - - - 323

III.—REMARKS ON IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES.

	Page
Chapter I.—Of God's Moral Government,	360
II.—Of Endless Punishment,	374
III.—Concerning the Divine Decrees,	405
IV.—Concerning Efficacious Grace,	440
V.—Of the Perseverance of Saints,	483
VI.—Of Satisfaction for Sin,	505
VII.—Concerning Faith,	536

EIGHT SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

SERMON I.

MAN'S NATURAL BLINDNESS

IN THE

THINGS OF RELIGION.

PSALM XCIV. 8—11.

Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*

SECTION I.

Introductory Observations.

IN these words the following particulars are to be observed. (1.) A certain spiritual *disease* charged on *some* persons, *viz.* darkness, and *blindness* of mind, appearing in their ignorance and folly. (2.) The great *degree* of this disease; so as to render the subjects of it *fools*. *Ye fools, when will ye be wise?* And so as to reduce them to a degree of *brutishness*. *Ye brutish among the people.* This ignorance and folly were to such

* This Treatise is a *posthumous* work, collected from the author's papers. They were drawn up by him in the form of three short *sermons*, in his usual way of preparation for the pulpit; but were by no means finished in a manner fit for the public eye. It is presumed, therefore, that the present form is much more suitable to the nature of the subject, than that in which they appeared in the Glasgow edition (1735) of Eighteen Sermons, connected with the Author's Life, by Dr HOPKINS.

This plan we shall adopt occasionally respecting some other *courses* of sermons, especially posthumous ones; which we are encouraged to do by several judicious friends, who are well acquainted with the author's writings. And we own, it is no small inducement in our view, to edite them in this manner in a standard edition, they are much more likely to do good at a future period. A *tract* may be *reprinted* with much greater probability of acceptance and success, than the same in the form of sermons, unfinished by the author, with divisions, transitions, &c. to which the generality of readers are unaccustomed.—W.

a degree, as to render men like beasts. (3.) The *obstinacy* of this disease; expressed in that interrogation, *When will ye be wise?* Their blindness and folly were not only very great; but deeply rooted and established, resisting all manner of cure. (4.) Of what *nature* this blindness is. It is especially in things pertaining to GOD. They were strangely *ignorant* of his perfections, like beasts: and had *foolish* notions of him, as though he did not see, nor know; and as though he would not execute justice by chastising and punishing wicked men. (5.) The *unreasonableness* and *sottishness* of the notion they had of God, that he did not *hear*, did not *observe* their reproaches of him and his people, is shown by observing that he *planted* the ear. It is very *unreasonable* to suppose that he, who gave power of perceiving words to *others*, should not perceive them *himself.* And the *sottishness* of their being insensible of God's all-seeing eye, and particularly of his seeing their wicked actions, appears, in that God is the being who *formed* the eye, and gave others a *power* of seeing. The sottishness of their apprehension of God, as though he did not know what they did, is argued from his being the *fountain* and original of all knowledge. The unreasonableness of their expecting to escape God's just chastisements and judgments for sin, is set forth by his chastising even the *heathen*, who did not sin against that light, or against so great mercies, as the wicked in Israel did; nor had ever made such a profession as they. (6.) We may observe, that this dreadful disease is ascribed to *mankind in general. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of* MAN, *that they are vanity.* The Psalmist had been setting forth the vanity and unreasonableness of the thoughts of *some* of the children of men; and immediately upon it he observes, that this vanity and foolishness of thought is *common* and *natural to mankind.*

From these particulars we may fairly deduce the following doctrinal observation: THAT THERE IS AN EXTREME AND BRUTISH BLINDNESS IN THINGS OF RELIGION, WHICH NATURALLY POSSESSES THE HEARTS OF MANKIND.—This doctrine is not to be understood as any reflection on the *capacity* of the human nature; for God hath made man with a noble and excellent capacity. The blindness I speak of, is not a merely *negative* ignorance; such as in trees and stones, that know nothing. They have no faculties of understanding and perception, whereby they should be capable of any knowledge. And inferior animals, though they have *sensitive* perception, are not capable of any *intellectual* views. There is no fault to be found with man's *natural* faculties. God has given men faculties truly noble and excellent; well capable of true wisdom and divine knowledge. Nor is the blindness I speak of like the ignorance of a new born infant which arises from want of necessary opportunity to exert these faculties.

The blindness that is in the heart of man, which is spoken of in the text and doctrine, is neither for want of *faculties*, nor *opportunity* to know, but from some positive cause.* There is a principle in his heart, of such a blinding and besotting nature, that it hinders the exercises of his *faculties* about the things of religion: exercises for which God has made him well capable, and for which he gives him abundant opportunity.

In order to make it appear, that such an extreme brutish blindness, with respect to the things of religion, does naturally possess the hearts of men, I shall show how this is manifest in those things that appear in men's open profession; and how it is manifest in those things that are found by inward experience, and are visible in men's practice.

Section II.

Man's Natural Blindness in Religion, manifested by those Things which appear in Men's open Profession.

I would now show, how it is manifest that there is a sottish and brutish blindness in the hearts of men in the things of religion, by those things which appear in men's open profession.

1. It appears in the *grossness* of that ignorance and those delusions, which have appeared among mankind. Man has faculties given him whereby he is well capable of inferring the being of the Creator from the creatures. The invisible things of God are very plainly and clearly to be seen by the things that are made; and the perfections of the divine Being, his eternal power and Godhead, are very manifest in the works of his hands. And yet grossly absurd notions concerning the Godhead have prevailed in the world. Instead of acknowledging and worshiping the *true* God, they have fallen off to the worship of idols. Instead of acknowledging the *one* only true God, they have made a *multitude* of deities. Instead of worshipping a God, who is an almighty, infinite, all-wise and holy Spirit, they have worshipped the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon and stars; and the works of their own hands, images of gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone; gods that can neither hear nor see, nor walk, nor speak, nor do, nor know any thing. Some in the shape of men, others in the shape of oxen and calves; some in the shape of serpents, others of fishes, &c.

The sottishness of men in thus worshipping the lifeless images which they themselves have made, is elegantly and forcibly represented by the prophet Isaiah. "The smith with the tongs

* This is meant in a *popular* not a *philosophical* sense: and is expressive of active, wilful perverseness, rather than the *abstract nature* of sin, or the *obliquity* of the natural act.—W.

both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms. Yea he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line: he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest; he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; for he will take thereof and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it: he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire: with part thereof he eateth flesh: he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, deliver me, for thou are my god. They have not known, nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see, and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire, yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"*

Many of the images which the heathen worshipped were made in the most *monstrous* and *terrible* shapes they could devise; and the more hideous and frightful they appeared, the better they supposed they would serve their turn for gods. Some of their images were made so as to be the most *unclean* representations; images of men openly exposing their nakedness. These unclean images, they judged, appeared in a god-like manner, and worthy to be worshipped. Many, instead of worshipping a holy and good God, and infinitely perfect Being, ascribed *vices* to many of the gods which they worshipped. One god they reckoned notorious for *drunkenness;* others notorious for *uncleanness:* to others they ascribed *lying* and *stealing;* to others *cruelty;* and yet looked upon them worthy to be worshipped as gods! Many worshipped *devils*, who appeared to them, and whom they themselves reckoned to be evil spirits; but yet built temples, and offered sacrifices to them, because they were afraid of them. Many worshipped *beasts*, and *birds*, and *fishes;* and the most hateful and loathsome animals were most worshipped; particularly, *serpents* were more commonly worshipped, than

* Isai. xliv. 12—19.

any other beast. Many worshipped *rivers*, and *trees*, and *mountains*. They worshipped many *diseases*. There is scarcely any thing of which men have not made gods.

And so far has that principle of *blindness* prevailed, with respect to the things of religion, that it has in a great measure extinguished all light in the minds of many, even in matters of *morality*, and things that have but a distant relation to religion. So that many whole nations have professedly approved of many things directly contrary to the light of nature; and the most *horrid vices* and immoralities have been esteemed *harmless*, yea accounted *virtues* among them; such as *revenge*, *cruelty* and *incest*. Many nations have openly allowed the practice of *sodomy*. And with some it has been accounted commendable to marry their nearest relations. Many have even worshipped their gods in their temples with acts of *drunkenness* and *whoredom*, and the most abominable lewdness. And the more filthy they were in their uncleanness, they thought their gods the more pleased and delighted with it.

Many nations have been so under the influence of mental blindness, that they have been void of all *civility*, and have been reduced to a state very little above the beasts in their common customs, and ordinary way of living; and in a great many things far below the beasts: being, if I may so speak, much more beastly than the beasts themselves. Now this has not been, because these men, with whom this has been the case, have not had the same *faculties* that we have. That we are not as ignorant as they, is not because we have better natural understandings, or that our minds are by nature more clear, and our eyes more discerning; or that our hearts are not naturally so inclined to sottishness and delusion as theirs. But only because God has not left us so much to ourselves, as he has them. He has given us more instruction to help us against our delusions. God has so ordered it in his providence, that we should have his good word to instruct us; and has caused that we should grow up from our infancy under christian instruction.

2. The extreme blindness and sottishness in things of religion, which is naturally in the hearts of men, appears not only in embracing and professing those errors that are very great, but also those that are so *unnatural*. They have not only embraced errors which are very contrary to *truth*, but very contrary to *humanity;* not only against the light of nature, but against the more innocent inclinations of nature. Such has been, and still is, the blindness of many nations in the world, that they embrace those errors which do not only exclude all true virtue, all holy dispositions; but those that have swallowed up the more harmless inclinations of human nature.

Thus they have embraced many gross delusions, that are as contrary as possible to *natural affection*. Such as offering up their own children in sacrifice to their idol; which has been a common thing in the heathen world. And the parents have not only offered them up to *death*, but they have brought them, and offered them up to the most *cruel* and *tormenting* deaths: as, to be *burnt alive*, to be *broiled* to death in burning brass; which was the way of offering up children to Moloch. The image of the idol being made of brass, in a horrid shape, was heated red hot; and the poor child was laid naked in this burning brass, and so burnt to death. And the *parents themselves* brought the child to this offering, however sweet and pleasant a child it might be. And thus the innocent child was tormented till it died, without any regard to its piteous cries. And it has been the manner of some nations, to offer in sacrifice the fairest and best beloved child that they had. And thus many thousands of poor babes have been offered up. So strong has been the tendency of the hearts of men to delusion, that it has thus overcome those strong natural affections which men have to the fruit of their own bodies.

And many of these delusions have been against men's natural love of their own ease, and aversion to pain. Many have worshipped their idols, and do so to this day, with such rites as are most painful and tormenting; cutting, gashing, and mangling their own flesh. Thus they sottishly worshipped Baal of old. "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."* And it is still the custom in some nations grievously to torment themselves: to kindle a fire to scorch their own bodies in a most miserable manner; and to put themselves to various and long-continued torments to please their idols. And it is the manner in some countries for persons, on certain occasions, to *kill* themselves; yea, to put themselves to *cruel* deaths; to cast themselves into great fires, and there burn themselves to death. How powerful must be the delusions of the human mind, and how strong the tendency of the heart to carry them such a length, and so to overcome the tenderest feelings of human nature!

3. The extreme blindness of the mind of man will appear further, if we consider how *general* gross ignorance and delusion has been. It has for the most part prevailed through the greater part of the world. For most of the time from Noah's flood to the coming of Christ, all nations, except the children of Israel, were overspread with gross heathenish darkness; being given up to the most vain and ridiculous notions, and all manner of superstitious, barbarous, absurd, and unnatural

* 1 Kings xviii. 28.

practices. And, for the greater part of the time since, most nations of the world have been covered with gross darkness.

So it is at this day. Many nations are under *popish* darkness, and are in such gross delusions that they worship the Virgin Mary, and a great multitude of dead men, whom their church has canonized for saints; some real saints, and others abominably wicked men. So they worship the *bread* in the sacrament, and account it not only the real body of Christ, but real Christ in body and soul, and divinity. They carry a *wafer*, a small piece of bread, in procession, fall down before it, *adore* it, and account it Christ himself, both in his divine and human nature; and yet believe that the body of Christ is in heaven, and in ten thousand different places on earth at the same time. They think they can do works of *supererogation;* that is, *more* good works than they are *obliged* to do, whereby they bring God into debt to them. They whip themselves, and put themselves to other ridiculous penances and sufferings, whereby they think they appease the anger of God for their sins. And they pay money to the priests, to *buy* the pardon of their sins; yea, they buy indulgencies for *future* crimes, or pardon for sins before they commit them. They think they defend themselves from evil spirits, by sprinkling holy water. They pay money to buy the souls of their departed friends out of purgatory; they worship the *relics* of dead saints; such as pieces of their bones, their teeth, their hair, pieces of their garments, and the like. And innumerable other such foolish delusions are they under.

A great part of the nations of the world are *Mahometans;* many of the articles of whose belief are too childish and ridiculous to be publicly mentioned in a solemn assembly.—But the greater part of the inhabitants of the world are to this day, gross, barbarous *heathens*, who have not the knowledge of the true God, but worship *idols* and *devils*, with all manner of absurd and foolish rites and ceremonies; and are destitute of even common civility: multitudes of nations being like beasts in human shape.—Now this barbarous ignorance and gross delusion being of such great extent and continuance, shows that the cause is *general*, and that the defect is in the *corrupted nature* of mankind; man's natural blindness and proneness of his heart to delusion.

4. The sottish blindness and folly of the heart of men appears in their being so *prone* to fall into such gross delusions, *soon* after they have been favoured with *clear* light. Were not the minds of men exceeding dark, they never would entertain such absurd notions at all; for they are as contrary as possible to reason: much less would they fall into them, after they had once been instructed in the truth. For, were it not very strange and great sottishness indeed, they would—when

they come to be informed of the truth, and have opportunity to compare it with those gross errors—behold such a reasonableness in the truth, and such absurdity in those errors, that they would never be in danger of being deluded by them any more. But yet so it is; mankind, after they have been *fully instructed*, and have lived in *clear light*, have, time after time, presently lost the knowledge of the truth, and have exchanged it for the most barbarous and brutish notions.

So it was early after the flood, whereby the wicked world, those that were visibly so, were destroyed; and none were left but those who professed the true religion: and they had such an eminently holy man as Noah to instruct them. And though the true God had so wonderfully and astonishingly manifested himself in that great work of vengeance against his enemies; yet the posterity of Noah, in great part, presently lost the knowledge of the true God, and fell away to idolatry; and that even while Noah was living. And the ancestors of Abraham were tainted with that idolatry; even Terah his own father. "And Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood," &c.* It seems as though Abraham was called away from his father's house, and from his own country, for this reason, that the country was overrun with idolatry.

And even many of the posterity of *Abraham* and *Isaac*—Abraham's posterity by Hagar and Keturah, and that part of Isaac's posterity which were of Esau—though the true religion was so thoroughly taught and practised in the houses of those holy patriarchs, and God had from time to time so wonderfully and miraculously manifested himself to them, yet—soon cast off the true God, and fell away to idolatry. For, not very long after, we read of the posterity of Jacob as being the *only* people of God, that he had in all the earth—And so the people of that part of the land of Canaan, who were under that holy king Melchizedeck, soon totally cast off the worship of the one only true God, which he taught and maintained. For before Joshua brought in the children of Israel, the inhabitants of that land were wholly given to idolatry. So the people of the land of Uz, who were under the government of so great and holy a man as Job, soon lost the knowledge of the true God, and all those religious truths which were then known among them, and sunk into gross idolatry.

So the posterity of *Jacob*, themselves—though God had manifested himself to them, and had wrought such wonders

* Josh. xxiv. ii, 3, 4.

for them in the time of Jacob and Joseph, yet—presently fell to worship the gods of Egypt. This appears from the words of Joshua. "Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt."* And how soon did they fall to worship a golden calf in the wilderness, in the midst of the wonderful and miraculous manifestations of the one only true God! And notwithstanding idolatry was so strictly forbidden, and the folly and wickedness of it so clearly manifested, in the law of Moses and in God's providence; yet, how soon did they fall into idolatry after they were brought into the land of Canaan! And when God raised up eminent men, judges to instruct and govern them, and reclaim them from their idolatrous practices, from time to time; though they professed to be convinced of their foolish delusion, yet they would soon fall again into the most sottish idolatry. And this they did soon after such great light as they enjoyed in the time of Samuel, David, and Solomon, and so, from time to time, down to the Babylonish captivity.

And in the *apostles'* times, when such great things were done to rouse the attention of mankind, and such great light was spread over many nations, multitudes, after they had been instructed in the Christian religion by the apostles and others, fell away into the grossest heresies, and embraced the most corrupt and absurd notions—After the Roman empire had been converted from heathenism to christianity, and the light of the gospel had driven out the sottish ignorance and gross absurdities of Pagan idolatry, in which they had continued so long; they soon began to fall away from the truth into *antichristian* superstition, and idolatry, in which are opinions and practices no less absurd than those of the heathen. And a great part of the christian world fell away to Mahometanism.

And since the *reformation*, wherein God wonderfully restored gospel light in a great part of the christian world, which was but about two hundred years ago, many are fallen away again; some to *popery*, some to gross *heresies*, and some to *atheistical* principles: so that the reformed church is greatly diminished. —And as to our nation in particular, which has been a nation favoured with light, since the reformation, above most, if not any in the world; how soon has it in great part fallen away! A great part of it to *atheism*, *deism*, and gross *infidelity*; and others to Arminianism, and to the Socinian and Arian heresies, to believe that Christ is a created dependent God; and to hold other foolish absurdities! And many have of late openly disputed and denied the moral evil of some of the greatest and most heinous vices.

* Josh. xxiv. 14.

These things show how desperately prone mankind are to blindness and delusion, how addicted they are to darkness.—God now and then, by his instructions, lifts up some nations out of such gross darkness: but then, how do they sink down into it again, as soon as his hand is withdrawn! like a heavy stone, which, though it may be forced upwards, yet sinks down again; and will continue to sink lower and lower with a swift progress, if there be nothing to restrain it. That is the woful tendency of the mind of man since the fall, notwithstanding his noble powers and faculties; even to sink down into a kind of brutality, to lose and extinguish all useful light, and to sink lower and lower into darkness.

5. The extreme and brutish blindness that possesses the hearts of men naturally, appears in their being so *confident* in gross errors and delusions. Some things mentioned already, show how confident and assured they are; particularly, their running such great ventures as offering up their children; and cutting and mangling themselves. Multitudes live and die in the most foolish and absurd notions and principles, and never seem to make any *doubt* of their being in the right.

The *Mahometans* seem to make no doubt but that, when they die, they shall go to such a paradise as Mahomet has promised them; where they shall live in all manner of sensual pleasures, and shall spend their time in gratifying the lusts of the flesh. Mahomet promised them, that all who die in war for the defence of the Mahometan religion, shall go to this paradise; and they make no doubt of it. Therefore, many of them as it were, willingly rush on upon the point of the sword.

The *Papists*, many of them at least, make no doubt of the truth of those foolish notions of a *purgatory*, and the power of the priests to deliver them out of it, and give them eternal life; and therefore will not spare vast sums of money to purchase deliverance from those imaginary torments. How confident are many *heretics*, in the grossest heresies; and how bold are many *deists*, in their infidelity!

6. The desperateness of that blindness which is in the heart of man, appears, in that no nation or people in the world ever have had any remedy or deliverance from such gross ignorance and delusion, from *themselves*. No instance can be mentioned of any people whatsoever, who have once fallen into heathenish darkness, or any other gross superstitions and ridiculous opinions in religion, that ever had any remedy by any wisdom of their *own;* or that have, of themselves, grown wiser by the improvement of their own faculties, and by instructing one another; or that ever had any remedy at all, by the teaching of any wise men, who did not professedly act as moved and directed of God; and did not declare, that they had their instructions, in the first place, from him.

Thus in the *Heathen* world. Before Christ's time, the whole world, except the Jews, lay in their darkness for a great many hundred years, even beyond all time of which they had any certain history among them. And there was no remedy, nor any appearance of a remedy; they continued, ages after ages, waxing worse and worse, sinking deeper and deeper. Among all the many nations in the world, no one ever bethought themselves, and emerged out of their brutish darkness. There were indeed some nations that emerged out of slavery, cast off the yoke of their enemies, grew great and conquered great part of the world, but they never conquered the blindness of their own hearts.

There were some nations who excelled in other knowledge; as the Greeks and Romans. They excelled in policy, and in the form of their civil government. They had wise political rulers; they had excellent laws for regulating their civil state; many of which have been imitated, as a pattern, by many christian nations ever since. They excelled many other nations in arts, government and civility, almost as much as men in common do beasts. Yet they never could deliver themselves from their *heathenism*. Though they were so wise in other things, yet in matters of religion they were very absurd and brutish. For even the Greeks and Romans, in their most flourishing state, worshipped innumerable gods; and some to whom they ascribed great *vices;* and some they worshipped with most obscene and horrid rites. To some they offered *human* sacrifices. The Romans had a temple dedicated to the *furies*, which they worshipped. And they had a multitude of childish notions and fables about their gods.

And though there were raised up some wise men and philosophers among the Greeks and Romans, who borrowed some things concerning the true God from the Jews; yet their instructions never were effectual to deliver any one *people*, or even one *city* or *town*, from their barbarous heathenism, or so much as to get *any one society*, or company of men, to unite in the *public worship of the true God.* And these philosophers themselves had many grossly absurd opinions, mingled with those scraps of truth which they had gathered up.

And the *Jews*, when fallen away to idolatry, as they often did, never recovered of *themselves.* Never any remedy appeared, unless God raised up, and extraordinarily moved, some person to reprove and instruct them.—And in *this age* of knowledge, an age wherein learning is carried to a great height, even many learned men seem to be carried away with the gross errors and fooleries of the *popish* religion.

Europe is a part of the world the most famed for arts and sciences of any; and these things have been carried to a much greater height in this age than in many others: yet many learned men in Europe at this day, who greatly excel in human arts and

literature, are still under popish darkness. A deceived heart has turned them aside; nor do they seem to have any power to deliver their souls: nor does it come into their minds, that there is a lie in their right hands.

Many men in *France* and in other countries, who are indeed men of great learning, knowledge and abilities, yet seem really to think that the church of Rome is the only true church of Christ; and are zealous to uphold and propagate it. And though now, within this hundred years, human learning has been very much promoted, and has risen to a greater height than ever in the world; and has greatly increased, not only in our nation, but in France and Italy, and other popish countries; yet there seems to be no such effect of it, as any considerable turning from popish delusions; but the church of Rome has rather increased of late, than otherwise.

And in *England*, a land wherein learning flourishes as much as in any in the world, and which is perhaps the most favoured with light of any; there are many men of vast learning, and great and strong reason, who have embraced, and do at this day, embrace the gross errors of the Arians and Deists. Our nation, in all its light and learning, is full of *infidels*, and those that are *further* from Christianity, than the very Mahometans themselves. Of so little avail is human strength, or human reason and learning, as a remedy against the extreme blindness of the human mind. The blindness of the mind, or an inclination to delusion in things of religion, is so strong, that it will overcome the greatest learning, and the strongest natural reason.

Men, if let alone, will not help one another; nor will they help themselves. The disease always proves without remedy, unless *God* delivers. This was observed of old: "and none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof: I have roasted flesh, and eaten of it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth of ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*

If God lets men alone, no light arises: but the darkness grows thicker and thicker. How is it now, at this very day, among all the nations where the light of the gospel has not come? Many of whose ancestors, without doubt, have been in the midnight darkness of heathenism for above three thousand years: and not one people have delivered themselves, who have not had the light of the gospel. And this is not owing to their want of as good *natural abilities* as we have; nor is it because they have an inclination more to neglect their natural abilities, or make a worse improvement of them than we.

* Isai. xliv. 19, 20.

7. The extreme blindness of man's heart, in matters of religion, appears by men falling into gross delusions, or continuing in them, at the same time that they have been under *great means* of instruction from God. We have many instances of this; as Rachel in Jacob's family; and the Israelites in the wilderness, &c. These last had great means of instruction; yet they set up the golden calf, &c. And after Joshua's time they persisted in their delusions and folly, from time to time, even under the reproofs of the prophets; and even in such horrid delusions, so contrary to natural affection, as offering their children in sacrifice to Moloch, burning them alive, in a most cruel manner.

In the time of Christ and the apostles, the Jews had great means of instruction, and most of the nations of the world were put under great advantages to come to the knowledge of the truth; yet what was the effect? It would be easier to pursue these remarks respecting the Papists in the time of the reformation, and since—the Arians and Deists in our day, &c.—but what has been said may be quite sufficient, if the reader will but indulge reflection.

8. The exceedingly great blindness of men, in things of religion, appears in the endless *disputes* and controversies, that there have been, and are, among men, about those things which concern religion.—Of old, the wise men and philosophers among the *heathen*, were, so to speak, infinitely divided among themselves. Varro, who was one of them, reckons up several hundred opinions about that one point, *Wherein man's happiness consisted?* And they were continually in disputes one with another. But the effect of their disputes was not any greater union, or any better agreement in their opinions. They were as much divided after they had disputed many ages, as they were at first; yea much more.

So there have long been disputes in the *Christian* world about opinions and principles in religion. There is a vast variety of sects and opinions; and disputes have been carried on, age after age, with great warmth, and thousands of volumes have been written one against another. And all these disputes have not terminated the differences, but they still subsist as much as ever; yea, they increase and multiply more and more. Instead of ending controversies by disputing, one dispute only lays a foundation for another. And thus the world goes on jangling and contending, daily writing and printing; being as it were deluged with controversial books; and all to no purpose.

The increase of human learning does not bring these controversies to an issue, but does really increase, and multiply them. There probably never was a time in our nation wherein there was such a vast variety of opinions in matters of religion, as at this day. Every now and then a new scheme of things is broached, and various and contrary opinions are mixed and jumbled,

divided and subdivided; and every new writer is willing to have the credit of some new notion.

And after this manner does this miserable world go on in endless confusion: like a great multitude of fool-hardy persons, who go on in the dark, stumbling and justling one against another, without perceiving any remedy for their own, or affording any for their neighbours' calamity.—Thus I have shown how the extreme blindness that possesses the hearts of men is manifest in what appears in their *profession*.

Section III.

Men's extreme Blindness manifested by inward Experience, and especially in their Practices under the Gospel.

I come now to show, how this is manifest in those things that are found by inward experience, and are visible in men's *practices* under the light of the gospel.

1. This appears in their being so *prone to be deceived* so many ways, or being liable to such a *multiplicity* of deceits. There are thousands of delusions in things which concern the affairs of religion, that men commonly are led away with, who yet live under the light of the gospel.—They are many ways deceived about *God*. They think him to be an exceeding diverse kind of being from what he is; altogether such an one as themselves.* They are deceived about his *holiness*, they do not realize it, that he is such a holy being as he indeed is, or that he hates sin with such a hatred as he declares he does. They are not convinced of his *truth*, or that he certainly will fulfil his threatenings or his promises. They are not convinced of his *justice* in punishing sin, as he does. They have very wrong notions of *Christ*. They are not convinced of his *ability* to save them, or of the *sufficiency* of his sacrifice and righteousness; nor of his *willingness* to receive them.

Men are commonly subject to a great many errors about their *duty*. They are ready to bring their principles to agree with their practices, instead of bringing their practices to their principles, as they ought to do. They will put innumerable false glosses on the rules of God's word, to bend them to a compliance with their lusts; and so they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

They are subject to deceits and delusions about the things of *this world*. They imagine that there is happiness and satisfaction to be found in the profits, pleasures, and honours, which are to be had here. They believe all the deluding flatteries and promises of a vain world. And they will hold that deceit and grand delusion, *that these things are the highest good;* and

* Psalm l. 21.

will act accordingly; will choose these things for their portion. And they will hold and practise upon that error, that these things are of long continuance, and are to be depended upon.

They are greatly deceived about the things of *another world*. They undervalue that heavenly glory, which is promised to the saints; and are not much terrified with what they hear of the damnation of hell; they cannot realize it, that its torments are so dreadful as they hear; and are very ready to imagine that they are not eternal, but will sometime or other have an end.

They are deceived about the state of *good men*. They think they are not happy, but live a melancholy life. And they are deceived about the *wicked*. They envy the state of many of them, as accounting them well off. "They call the proud happy,* and bless the covetous whom God abhors.†" And they strive a great deal more after such enjoyments as these have, than after such as are the portion of the godly.

They are subject to a thousand deceits and delusions about *themselves*. They think themselves wise, when they are fools. They are deceived about their own hearts; they think them much better than they really are. They think they see many good things in themselves, when indeed there is nothing good there. They appear lovely in their own eyes, when their hearts are like the inside of a grave, full of dead men's bones and rotten flesh, crawling worms, and all uncleanness. Or rather the inward vault of hell, that is an habitation of devils and every foul spirit. Those things in their hearts are highly esteemed by them, which are an abomination in the sight of God.

Men are very prone to be deceived about their own *state*; to think themselves something when they are nothing; and to suppose themselves "rich and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing; when they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." They are greatly deceived about the *principles* they act from. They think they are sincere in that in which there is no sincerity; and that they do those things from love to God, which they do only from love to themselves. They call mere speculative or natural knowledge, spiritual knowledge; and put conscience for grace; a servile, for a child-like fear; and common affections, that are only from natural principles, and have no abiding effect, for high discoveries, and eminent actings of grace. Yea, it is common with men to call their vicious dispositions by the name of some virtue. They call their anger and malice, zeal for a righteous cause, or zeal for the public good; and their covetousness, frugality.

They are vastly deceived about their own *righteousness*. They think their affections and performances lovely to God, which indeed are hateful to him. They think their tears, reformations

* Mal. iii. 15. † Psal. x. 3.

and prayers, sufficient to make atonement for their sins; when indeed if all the angels in heaven should offer themselves in sacrifice to God, it would not be sufficient to atone for one of their sins. They think their prayers and works, and religious doings, a sufficient price to purchase God's favour and eternal glory; when, as they perform them, they do nothing but merit hell.

They are greatly deceived about their *strength*. They think they are able to mend their own hearts, and work some good principles in themselves; when they can do no more towards it then a dead corpse does towards raising itself to life. They vainly flatter themselves, they are able to come to Christ, when they are not. They are greatly deceived about the *stability* of their own hearts. They foolishly think their own intentions and resolutions of what good they will do hereafter, to be depended on; when indeed there is no dependence at all to be had on them. They are greatly deceived about their *opportunities*. They think that the long continuance of their opportunity is to be depended on, and that to-morrow is to be boasted of; when indeed there is the utmost uncertainty of it. They flatter themselves that they shall have a better opportunity to seek salvation hereafter, than they have now; when there is no probability of it, but a very great improbability.

They are greatly deceived about their own actions and *practices*. Their own faults are strangely hid from their eyes. They live in ways that are very unbecoming Christians, but yet seem not to be at all sensible of it. Those evil ways of theirs, which are very plain to others, are hid from them. Yea, those very things, which they themselves account great faults in others, they will justify themselves in. Those things for which they will be very angry with others, they at the same time do themselves, and oftentimes in a much higher degree, and never once think of it. While they are zealous to pull the mote out of their brother's eye, they know not that a beam is in their own eye.

Those sins that they commit, which they are sensible are sins they are wofully deceived about. They call great sins, little ones; and in their own imaginations, find out many excuses, which make the guilt very small; while the many heinous aggravations are hid from their eyes. They are greatly deceived about themselves, when they compare themselves with others. They esteem themselves better than their neighbours, who are indeed much better than themselves. They are greatly deceived about themselves, when they compare themselves with God. They are very insensible of the difference there is between God and them, and act in many things as if they thought themselves his equals; yea, as if they thought themselves above him. Thus manifold are the deceits and delusions that men fall into.

2. The desperate blindness that is natural to men, appears in their being so ignorant and blind in things that are so clear and *plain*. Thus if we consider how great God is, and how dreadful sin against him must be, and how much sin we are guilty of, and of what importance it is that his infinite Majesty should be indicated; how plain is it, that man's righteousness is insufficient! And yet how greatly will men confide in it! how will they ascribe more to it, than can be ascribed to the righteousness of the sinless and glorious angels of heaven! What can be more plain in itself, than that eternal things are of infinitely greater importance than temporal things? And yet how hard is it thoroughly to convince men of it! How plain is it, that eternal misery in hell is infinitely to be dreaded? And yet how few appear to be thoroughly convinced of this! How plain is it, that life is uncertain? and yet how much otherwise do most men think! How plain is it, that it is the highest prudence in matters of infinite concern to improve the first opportunity, without trusting to another? but yet how few are convinced of this? How reasonable is it, considering that God is a wise and just Being, to suppose that there shall be a future state of rewards and punishments, wherein every man shall receive according to his works? And yet, how does this seem like a dream to most men.

What can be in itself more plain and manifest, and easily to be known by us, if it were not for a strange blindness, than we are to ourselves, who are always with, never absent from ourselves; always in our own view, before our own eyes? Who have opportunity to look into our own hearts, and see all that passes there. And yet what is there that men are more ignorant of, than they are of themselves? There are many vicious practices, the unlawfulness of which is very plain; the sins are gross, and contrary not only to the word of God, but to the light of nature: and yet men will often plead, there is no harm in such sins; such as, many acts of gross uncleanness; and many acts of fraud, injustice and deceitfulness; and many others that might be mentioned.

There is no one thing whatsoever more plain and manifest, and more demonstrable, than the being of a God. It is manifest in ourselves, in our own bodies and souls, and in every thing about us wherever we turn our eye, whether to heaven, or to the earth, the air or the seas. And yet how prone is the heart of man to call this into question? So inclined is the heart of man to blindness and delusion, that it is prone to even atheism itself.

3. The great blindness of the heart of man appears, in that so *little* a thing will deceive him, and confound his judgment. A little self-interest, or only the bait of some short gratification of a sensual appetite, or a little stirring of passion will blind men's eyes and make them argue and judge most strangely and per-

versely, and draw the most absurd conclusion; such, as if they were indifferent, they would see to be most unreasonable. The devil finds easy work to deceive them a thousand ways; an argument of the great weakness and blindness of our minds. As a little child, weak in understanding, is very easily deceived.

4. The woful blindness that possesses the hearts of men naturally, appears in their being all totally ignorant of *that* in God, which they had most need to know: *viz.* the glory and *excellency* of his nature. Though our faculties, which we have above the beast, were chiefly given us, that we might know this; and though without this knowledge all other will signify nothing to us; and our faculties are as capable of it, as of any other knowledge whatsoever—and which is as plainly and abundantly manifested as any thing whatsoever, innumerable ways, both in the word and works of God—yet all men naturally are totally ignorant of this; as ignorant as one born blind is of colours. Natural men of the greatest abilities and learning, are as ignorant of it, as the weakest and the most unlearned; yea, as ignorant as the very stocks and stones; for they see, and can see nothing at all of it.

5. It appears, in that they are so blind in those *same things* in religious matters, which they are sufficiently sensible of in other matters. In temporal things they are very sensible that it is a point of prudence to improve the first opportunity in things of great importance. But in matters of religion, which are of infinitely the greatest importance, they have not this discernment. In temporal matters they are sensible that it is a great folly long to delay and put off, when life is in danger, and all depends upon it. But in the concerns of their souls, they are insensible of this truth. So in the concerns of this world, they are sensible it is prudence to improve times of special advantage, and to embrace a good offer when made them. They are sensible that things of long continuance are of greater importance, than those of short duration; yet in religious concerns, none of these things are sensibly discerned. In temporal things they are sufficiently sensible, that it is a point of prudence to lay up for hereafter, in summer to lay up for winter, and to lay up for their families, after they are dead; but men do not generally discern the prudence of making a proper provision for a future state.—In matters of importance in this world, they are sensible of the wisdom of taking thorough care to be on sure grounds; but in their soul's concerns, they see nothing of this. Our Saviour observed this to be the case with the Jews when he was upon earth. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"*

6. The desperate blindness that naturally possesses the hearts

* Luke. xii. 56.

of men under the gospel, appears in their remaining so *stupidly insensible* and deceived, under so great means of instruction and conviction. If they were brought up under heathenish darkness it would not be so full a demonstration of it: but thus they remain, though under the clearest light, under the glorious light of the gospel, where they enjoy God's own instructions in his word, in a great fulness and plainness, and have the evidence and truth of things set before them from time to time in the plainest manner. They have the arguments of God's being and perfection; and of another world. They are told how eternal things are of greater importance than temporal; and of what importance it is to escape eternal misery. How much it is worth while to take pains for heavenly glory; and how vain their own righteousness is: but yet to what little purpose?

And they have not only great means of instruction in God's word, but also in providence. They have the evidence of the shortness and uncertainty of life. "He seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Yet "their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings." They find the world is vain and unsatisfactory; they find the great instability andtreachery of their own hearts; and how their own good intentions and resolutions are not to be depended on. They often find by experience, that their attempts to make them better, fail; but alas! with what small effect.

Such abundant evidence is there, both in what appears in the *open profession* of men; and also by what is *found* in their *inward experience*, and is *evident* in their *practice*, of the extreme and brutish ignorance and blindness, which naturally possess their hearts.

Section IV.

Practical Inferences and Application of the Subject.

Having shown how the truth of the doctrine is evident, both by what appears in men's *open profession*, and by those things which are *found* by *inward experience*, and are *manifest* by what is visible in men's *practice;* I proceed to improve the subject.

I. By this we may see how manifest are the *ruins* of the *fall* of man. It is observable in all the kinds of God's creatures that we behold, that they have those properties and qualities, which are every way proportioned to their end; so that they need no more, they stand in need of no greater degree of perfection, in order well to answer the special use for which they seem to be

designed. The brute creatures, birds, beasts, fishes, and insects, though there be innumerable kinds of them, yet all seem to have such a degree of perception and perfection given them, as best suits their place in the creation, their manner of living, and the ends for which they were made. There is no defect visible in them; they are perfect in their kind; there seems to be nothing wanting, in order to their filling up their allotted place in the world. And there can be no reasonable doubt but that it was so at first with mankind. It is not reasonable to suppose, that God would make many thousands of kinds of creatures in this lower world, and one kind the highest of them all, to be the head of the rest; and that all the rest should be complete in their kinds, every way endowed with such qualifications as are proportioned to their use and end: and only this most noble creature of all, left exceeding imperfect, notoriously destitute of what he principally stands in need of to answer the end of his being. The principal faculty by which God has distinguished this noble creature from the rest, is his understanding; but would God so distinguish man in his creation from other creatures, and then seal up that understanding with such an extreme blindness, as to render it useless, as to the principal ends of it; and wholly to disenable him from answering the ends of an intelligent creature, and to make his understanding rather a misery than a blessing to him; and rendering him much more mischievous than useful? Therefore, if the scripture had not told us so, yet we might safely conclude, that mankind are not now, as they were made at first; but that they are in a *fallen* state and condition.

II. From what has been said, plainly appears the *necessity* of divine *revelation*. The deists deny the scripture to be the word of God, and hold that there is no *revealed religion*, that God has given mankind no other rule but his own reason; which is sufficient, without any word or revelation from heaven to give man a right understanding of divine things, and of his duty. But how is it proved in fact? How much trial has there been, whether man's reason, without a revelation, would be sufficient or not: the whole world, excepting one nation, had the trial till the coming of Christ. And was not this long enough for trial, whether man's reason alone was sufficient to instruct him? Those nations, who all that time lay in such gross darkness, and in such a deplorable helpless condition, had the same natural reason that the deists have. And during this time, there was not only one man, or a succession of single persons that had the trial, whether their own reason would be sufficient to lead them to the knowledge of the truth; but all nations, who all had the same human faculties that we have. If human reason is really sufficient, and there be no need of any thing else, why has it never proved so? Why has it never happened, that so much as one nation, or one city or town, or one assembly of men, have

been brought to tolerable notions of divine things, unless it be by the revelation contained in the scriptures? If it were only one nation that had remained in such darkness, the trial might not be thought so great; because one particular people might be under some disadvantages, which were peculiar. But thus it has been with *all nations*, except those which have been favoured with the scriptures, and in *all ages*. Where is any people who to this day have ever delivered themselves by their own reason, or have been delivered without light fetched from the scriptures, or by means of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

If human reason is sufficient without the scripture, is it not strange that, in these latter ages—since navigation has been so improved, and America and many other parts of the world have been discovered, which were before unknown—no one nation has any where been found already enlightened, and possessed of true notions about the Divine Being and his perfections, by virtue of that human reason they have been possessed of so many thousand years? The many poor, barbarous nations here, in America, had the faculty of *reason* to do what they pleased with, *before* the Europeans came hither, and brought over the light of the gospel. If human reason alone was sufficient, it is strange, that no one people were found, in any corner of the land, who were helped by it, in the chief concern of man.

There has been a great trial, as to what men's reason can do without divine help, in those endless disputes that have been maintained. If human reason alone could help mankind, it might be expected that these disputes would have helped them, and have put an end to men's darkness. The heathen philosophers had many hundreds of years to try their skill in this way: but all without effect. That divine revelation, which the church of God has been possessed of, has been in the world "as a light shining in a dark place."* It is the only remedy which God has provided for the miserable, brutish blindness of mankind, a remedy without which this fallen world would have sunk down for ever in brutal barbarism without any remedy. It is the only means that the true God has made successful in his Providence, to give the nations of the world the knowledge of himself; and to bring them off from the worship of false gods.

If human reason be the *only* proper means, the means, that God has designed for enlightening mankind, is it not very strange, that it has not been sufficient, nor has answered this end in any one instance. All the right *speculative* knowledge of the true God, which the deists themselves have, has been derived from divine revelation. How vain is it to dispute against fact, and the experience of so many thousand years? And to pretend that human reason is sufficient without divine revelation, when

* 2 Peter i. 19.

so many thousand years experience, among so many hundreds of nations, of different tempers, circumstances and interests, has proved the contrary? One would think all should acknowledge that so long a time is sufficient for a trial; especially considering the miseries that the poor nations of the world have been under all this while, for want of light: the innumerable *temporal* calamities and miseries—such as sacrificing children, and many other cruelties to others, and even to themselves—besides that *eternal* perdition, which we may reasonably suppose to be the consequence of such darkness.

III. This doctrine should make us sensible, how great a *mercy* it is to mankind, that God has sent his own SON into the world, to be the *light* of the world.—The subject shows what great need we stand in of some *teacher* to be sent from God. And even some of the wiser men among the *heathen* saw the *need* of this. They saw that they disputed and jangled among themselves without coming to a satisfying discovery of the truth; and hence they saw, and spoke of the need there was of a teacher sent from *heaven*. And it is a wonderful instance of *divine mercy* that God has so beheld us in our low estate, as to provide such a glorious remedy. He has not merely sent some *created angel* to instruct us, but his *own Son*, who is in the bosom of the Father, and of the same nature and essence with him; and therefore infinitely better acquainted with him, and more sufficient to teach a blind world. He has sent him to be the light of the world, as he says of himself, "I am come a light into the world."* When he came, he brought glorious light. It was like the day-spring from on high, visiting a dark world, as Zacharias observes.† After Christ came, then the glorious gospel began to spread abroad, delivering those "that had sitten in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death."

What reason have we to rejoice, and praise God, that he has made such excellent provision for us; and has set so glorious a sun in our firmament, such a "Sun of righteousness," after we had extinguished the light which at first enlightened us; and had, as it were, brought the world into that state, in which it was when "without form, and void," and darkness was on the face of it‡.—The glory of that light which God has sent into the world, is fully answerable to the grossness of that darkness which filled it. For Christ who came to enlighten us, is truth and light itself and the fountain of all light. "He is *the light*, and in him is no darkness at all."§

IV. Hence we may learn, what must be the thing which will bring to pass those glorious days of light, which are spoken of in God's word.—Though mankind be fallen into such darkness, and

* John xii. 46. † Luke i. 77, 78, 79. ‡ See Jer. iv. 22. 23.
§ 1 John i. 5.

the world be mostly in the kingdom of darkness; yet the scripture often speaks of a *glorious day*, wherein light shall fill the earth. "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."* "And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."† "The knowledge of God shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea."‡

By what we have heard, we may on good grounds conclude, that whenever this is accomplished, it will not be effected by human learning, or by the skill or wisdom of great men. What has been before observed of this learned age, is a presumptive evidence of it; wherein spiritual darkness increases with the increase of learning. God will again make foolish the wisdom of this world; and will, as it were, say in his providence, "Where is the wise! where is the scribe! where is the disputer of this world!"

When this shall be accomplished, it will be by *a remarkable pouring out of God's own Spirit, with the plain preaching of the gospel of his Son;* the preaching of the spiritual, mysterious doctrines of Christ crucified, which to the learned men of this world are foolishness; those doctrines, which are *the stumbling block of this learned age.* "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It will not be by the enticing words of man's wisdom; but by the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. Not by the wisdom of this world, nor by the princes of this world, that come to nought: but by the gospel, that contains the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world, who have nothing to enlighten them but their own learning, know any thing of.

The Spirit of God, who searches all things, even the deep things of God, must reveal it. For let natural men be never so worldly wise and learned, they receive not the things of the Spirit: they are foolishness to them; nor can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This great effect, when it is accomplished, will be a glorious effect indeed: and it will be accomplished in such a manner, as most remarkably to show it to be the work of God, and his only. It will be a more glorious work of God than that which we read of in the beginning of Genesis. *And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.*‖

* Isai. lx. 2, 3. † Isai. xxv. 7. ‡ Isai. xi. 9. ‖ Gen. i. 2, 3.

V. Hence we may learn the misery of all such persons, as are under the power of that darkness which naturally possesses their hearts. There are two degrees of this misery.

1. That of which all who are in a natural condition are the subjects. The doctrine shows, that all such as are in a natural condition, are in a miserable condition: for they are in an extremely dark and blind condition. It is uncomfortable living in darkness. What a sorrowful state would we all be in, if the sun should no more rise upon us, and the moon were to withdraw her shining, and the stars to be put out, and we were to spend the rest of our time in darkness? The world would soon perish, in such darkness. It was a great plague in Egypt, when they had a total darkness for three days. They who are deprived of sight are deprived of the most noble of the senses; they have no benefit of external light, one of the most excellent and needful of all the things which God has made in the visible creation. But they who are without spiritual sight and light, are destitude of that which is far more excellent and necessary.

That natural men are not *sensible* of their blindness, and the misery they are under by reason of it, is no argument that they are not miserable. For it is very much the nature of this calamity to be hid from itself, or from those who are under it. Fools are not sensible of their folly. Solomon says, "The fool is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason."* The most barbarous and brutish heathens are not sensible of their own darkness; are not sensible but that they enjoy as great light, and have as good understanding of things, as the most enlightened nations in the world.

2. Another degree of this misery, is of those who are judicially given up of God, to the blindness of their own minds. The scripture teaches us that there are some such. *What then: Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*† *But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away.*‡ *And he said, go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed.*§ This judgment, when inflicted, is commonly for the contempt and abuse of light which has been offered, for the commission of presumptuous sins, and for being obstinate in sin, and resisting the Holy Ghost, and many gracious calls and counsels, warnings and reproofs.

Who the particular persons are, that are thus judicially given up of God to the blindness of their minds, is not known to men.

* Prov. xxvi. 16. Rom. xi. 7. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 14. § Isai. vi. 6. 10.

But we have no reason to suppose that there are not multitudes of them; and most in places of the greatest light. There is no manner of reason to suppose, that this judgment, which is spoken of in scripture, is in a great measure *peculiar* to those old times. As there were many who fell under it in the times of the prophets of old, and of Christ and his apostles; so doubtless there are now also. And though the persons are not known, yet doubtless there may be more reason to fear it concerning some than others. All who are under the power of the blindness of their own minds, are miserable; but such as are given up to this blindness, are especially miserable; for they are reserved, and sealed over to the blackness of darkness for ever.

Section V.

Address to Sinners.

The consideration of what has been said of the desperate blindness which possesses the hearts of us all naturally, may well be terrifying to such as are yet in a Christless condition, in this place of light; where the gospel has been so long enjoyed, and where God has in times past so wonderfully poured out his Spirit.

And let such persons, for their awakening, consider the following things.

1. That they are blinded by the god of this world. Their blindness is from hell. This darkness which natural men are under, is from the prince of darkness. This the apostle says expressly of those who remain in unbelief and blindness under the gospel. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.** They belong to the kingdom of darkness. In that darkness which reigns in their souls, the devil reigns, and he holds his dominion there.

2. Consider how God in his word manifests his abhorence and wrath towards those who remain so sottishly blind and ignorant, in the midst of light. How doth God speak of them! *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?*† *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.*‡ *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation! —they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger.*§ *It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will*

* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. † Psal. xiv. 4. ‡ Psal. xiv. 10, 11. § Isai. i. 3, 4.

*not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.** *My people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*† *Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in the house of Judah, saying, hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which have ears and hear not. Fear ye not* ME, *saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at* MY *presence?*‡

3. Consider how much *wilfulness* there is in your ignorance. Sinners are ready wholly to excuse themselves in their blindness; whereas, as observed already, the blindness that naturally possesses the hearts of men, is not a merely negative thing; but they are blinded by *the deceitfulness of sin.*§ There is a perverseness in their blindness. There is not a mere absence of light, but a malignant opposition to the light; as God says, *they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness.*‖ Christ observes, *that every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.* And that *this is their condemnation that light is come into the world, yet men loved darkness rather than light.*¶ And I may appeal to your own consciences, whether you have not wilfully rejected the many instructions you have had: and refused to hearken? Whether you have not neglected your bible? Whether you have not been a very negligent hearer of the word preached, and neglected other proper means of knowledge? Whether you have not neglected to cry to God for that wisdom which you need? Yea, have you not resisted the means of knowledge? Have you not resisted and quenched the motions of the spirit, which at times you have had? And taken a course to make yourself more and more stupid, by stifling the convictions of your own conscience, and doing contrary to the light thereof; whereby you have done those things that have tended to sear your conscience, and make yourself more and more senseless and sottish?

4. Consider what is the course that God will take to teach those who will not be taught by the instructions of his word. He will teach them by briers and thorns, and by the flames of hell. Though natural men will remain to all eternity ignorant of the excellency and loveliness of God's nature, and so will have no spiritual knowledge; yet God in another world will make them thoroughly to understand many things, which senseless unawakened sinners are sottishly ignorant of in this world. Their eyes in many respects shall be thoroughly opened in hell. Their judgments will be rectified. They shall be of the same judgment with the godly. They shall be convinced of the *reality* of those things which they would not be convinced of here; as

* Isai. xxvii. 10. † Jer. iv. 22. ‡ Jer. v. 20, 21, 22. § Heb. iii. 13.
‖ Psal. lxxii. 5. ¶ John iii. 19, 20.

the being of God; his power, holiness, and justice; that the scriptures are the word of God; that Christ is the Son of God; and that time is short and uncertain. They will be convinced of the vanity of the world; of the blessed opportunity they had in the world; and how much it is men's wisdom to improve their time. We read of the rich man, who was so sottishly blind in this world, that *in hell he lift up his eyes, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.** With many men, alas! the first time they open their eyes is in hell.

God will make all men to know the truth of those great things which he speaks of in his word, one way or another; for he will vindicate his own truth. He has undertaken to convince all men. They who will not be convinced in this world, by the gentle and gracious methods which God uses with them now, shall be convinced hereafter by severe means. If they will not be convinced for salvation they shall be convinced by damnation. God will make them know that he is the Lord. And he will make them know that he bears rule. *Consume them in wrath, that they may not be; and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth.*† *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame and perish. That men may know that thou, whose name is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.* ‡

What great care we had need all have, that we be not deceived in matters of religion. If our hearts are all naturally possessed with such an extreme brutish ignorance and blindness in things of religion, and we are exceedingly prone to delusion: then surely great care ought to be taken to avoid it. For that we are naturally prone to delusion, shows our danger: but the greater our danger of any calamity is, the greater had our watchfulness need to be.—Let us therefore be hence warned to take heed that we be not deceived about our duty; about our own hearts; about our ways; about our state; and about our opportunities. Thousands are deceived in these things, and thousands perish by that means. Multitudes fall on our right hand and on our left, and are ruined eternally by their delusion in these things.

How foolish a thing it is for men to lean to their own understanding, and trust their own hearts. If we are so blind, then our own wisdom is not to be depended on; and that advice of the wise man is most reasonable; *trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.*§ *And he that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.*‖—They therefore are fools, who trust to their own wisdom, and will question the mysterious doctrines of religion; because they cannot see through them, and will not trust to the infinite wisdom of God.

* Luke xvi. 23. † Psalm lix. 13. ‡ Psalm lxxxiii. 17, 18. § Prov. iii. 5. ‖ Prov. xxviii. 26.

Let us therefore become fools; be sensible of our own natural blindness and folly. There is a treasure of wisdom contained in that one sentence; *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.** Seeing our own ignorance and blindness, is the first step towards having true knowledge. *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*†

Let us ask wisdom of God. If we are so blind in ourselves, then knowledge is not to be sought for out of our own stock, but must be sought from some other source. And we have no where else to go for it, but to the fountain of light and wisdom. True wisdom is a precious jewel; and none of our fellow creatures can give it us, nor can we buy it with any price we have to give. It is the sovereign gift of God. The way to obtain it, is to go to him, sensible of our weakness and blindness, and misery on that account. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.*‡

* 1 Cor. iii. 18. † 1 Cor. viii. 2. ‡ Jas. i. 5.

SERMON II.

MEN

NATURALLY GOD'S ENEMIES.

ROMANS v. 10.

For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

THE apostle, from the beginning of the epistle, to the beginning of this chapter, had insisted on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In this chapter he goes on to consider the benefits that are consequent on justification, *viz.* Peace with God, present happiness, and hope of glory. Peace with God is mentioned in the first verse; *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the following verses he speaks of present blessedness, and hope of glory. *By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* —And concerning this benefit, the hope of glory, the apostle particularly takes notice of two things, *viz.* the blessed nature of this hope, and the sure ground of it.

1. He insists on the *blessed nature* of this hope, in that it enables us to glory in tribulations. This excellent nature of true Christian hope is described in the following words, (ver. 3—5.) *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.* As if he had said, Through hope of a blessed reward, that will abundantly more than make up for all *tribulation*, we are enabled to bear tribulation with *patience;* patiently bearing, and patiently waiting for the reward. And patience

works *experience*; for when we thus bear tribulation with patient waiting for the reward, this brings experience of the earnest of the reward, *viz.* the earnest of the Spirit, in our feeling the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. So that our hope does not make us ashamed: it is not disappointed; for in the midst of our tribulation, we experience those blessed incomes of the Spirit in our souls, that make even a time of tribulation sweet to us; and is such an earnest as abundantly confirms our hope; and so experience works hope.

2. The apostle takes notice of the *sure ground* there is for this hope; or the abundant evidence we have, that we shall obtain the glory hoped for, in that peace we have with God, by our justification through Christ's blood. For while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us; even while we were ungodly and sinners, enemies to God and Christ. (See ver. 6—10.) The apostle's argument is exceeding clear and strong. If God has done already so great a thing for us, as to give us Christ to die and shed his precious blood for us, which was vastly the greatest thing, we need not doubt but that he will bestow life upon us. It is but a small thing for God actually to bestow eternal life, after it is purchased; to what it is for him to give his own Son to die, in order to purchase it. The giving Christ to purchase it, was virtually all: it included the whole grace of God in salvation. When Christ had purchased salvation at such a dear rate, all the difficulty was got through, all was virtually over and done. It is a small thing, in comparison, for God to bestow salvation, after it has been thus purchased at a full price. Sinners who are justified by the death of Christ, are already virtually saved; the thing is, as it were, done: what remains, is no more than the necessary consequence of what is done. Christ when he died made an end of sin; and when he rose from the dead, he did virtually rise with the elect, he brought them up from death with him, and ascended into heaven with them. And therefore, when this is already done, and we are thus reconciled to God through the death of his Son, we need not fear but that we shall be saved by his life. The love of God appears much more in his giving his Son to die for sinners, than in giving eternal life after Christ's death.

The giving of Christ to die for us is here spoken of as a much greater thing, than the actual bestowment of life; because this is all that has any difficulty in it.—When God did this for us, he did it for us, as sinners and enemies. But in actually bestowing salvation on us after we are justified, we are not looked upon as sinners, but as perfectly righteous persons: he beholds no iniquity in us. We are no more enemies, but reconciled. When God gave Christ to die for the elect, he looked on them as they are in themselves; but in actually bestowing eternal life, he looks on them as they are in Christ.

There are *three* epithets used in the text and context, as appertaining to sinners as they are in themselves, verse 6—8.

They are *without strength*, they cannot help themselves.—They are *ungodly* or sinners,—and they are *enemies:* as in the text.—NATURAL MEN ARE GOD'S ENEMIES.

God, though the creator of all things, yet has some enemies in the world:—Men in general will own, that they are sinners. There are few, if any, whose consciences are so blinded as not to be sensible they have been guilty of sin. And most sinners will own that they have bad hearts. They will own that they do not love God, so much as they should do; that they are not so thankful as they ought to be for mercies; and that in many things they fail. And yet few of them are sensible that they are God's enemies. They do not see how they can be truly so called; for they are not sensible that they wish God any hurt, or endeavour to do him any.

But we see that the scripture speaks of them as enemies to God. So in our text, and elsewhere; *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works.* Col. i. 21. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* Rom. vii. 7.—And that all natural or unregenerate men are indeed such, is what I shall endeavour now particularly to show. Which I propose to do in the following method. Particularly in what respects they are enemies to God.—To how great a degree they are enemies—and why they are enemies. Then I shall answer some objections.

SECTION I.

In what respects Natural Men are God's Enemies.

1. THEIR enmity appears in their judgments, their natural relish, their wills, affections, and practice. They have a very mean esteem of God. Men are ready to entertain a good esteem of those with whom they are friends: they are apt to think highly of their qualities, to give them their due praises; and if there be defects, to cover them. But of those to whom they are enemies they are disposed to have mean thoughts; they are apt to entertain a dishonourable opinion of them; they will be ready to look contemptibly upon any thing that is praise-worthy in them.

So it is with natural men towards God. They entertain very low and contemptible thoughts of God. Whatever honour and respect they may pretend, and make a show of towards God, if their practice be examined, it will show, that they certainly look upon him as a Being, that is but little to be regarded. The language of their hearts is, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Exod. v. 2. *What is the Almighty, that we should*

serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him? Job xxi. 15. They count him worthy neither to be loved nor feared. They dare not behave with that slight and disregard towards one of their fellow-creatures, when a little raised above them in power and authority, as they dare, and do towards God. They value one of their equals, much more than God, and are ten times more afraid of offending such, than of displeasing the God that made them. They cast such exceeding contempt on God, as to prefer every vile lust before him. And every worldly enjoyment is set higher in their esteem, than God. A morsel of meat, or a few pence of worldly gain, is preferred before him. God is set last and lowest in the esteem of natural men.

2. They are enemies in the *natural relish* of their souls. They have an inbred distaste and disrelish of God's perfections. God is not such a being as they would have. Though they are ignorant of God; yet from what they hear of him, and from what is manifest by the light of nature, they do not like him. By his being endowed with such attributes as he is, they have an aversion to him. They hear God is an infinitely holy, pure, and righteous Being, and they do not like him upon this account; they have no relish of such qualifications: they take no delight in contemplating them. It would be a mere task, a bondage to a natural man, to be obliged to set himself to contemplate those attributes of God. They see no manner of beauty or loveliness, nor taste any sweetness in them. And on account of their distaste of these perfections, they dislike all his other attributes. They have greater aversion to him because he is omniscient and knows all things; and because his omniscience is an holy omniscience. They are not pleased that he is omnipotent, and can do whatever he pleases; because it is a holy omnipotence. They are enemies even to his mercy, because it is a holy mercy. They do not like his immutability because by this he never will be otherwise than he is, an infinitely holy God.

It is from this disrelish that natural men have of the attributes of God, that they do not love to have much to do with God. The natural tendency of the heart of man is to fly from God, and keep at a distance from him, as far off as possible.—A natural man is averse to communion with God, and is naturally disinclined to those exercises of religion, wherein he has immediately to do with him. It is said of wicked men, Psal. x. 4, *God is not in all their thoughts.* It is evident, that the mind of man is naturally averse to thinking about God, and hence if any thoughts of him be suggested to the mind, they soon go away; such thoughts are not apt to rest in the minds of natural men. If any thing is said to them of God, they are apt to forget it: it is like seed that falls upon the hard path, the fowls of the air soon take it away; or like seed that falls upon a rock. Other things will stick; but divine things rebound: and if they were cast into the mind, they

meet with that there which soon thrusts them out again; they meet with no suitable entertainment, but are soon chased away.

Hence also it is, that natural men are with difficulty persuaded to be constant in the duty of secret prayer. They would not be so averse to spending a quarter of an hour, night and morning, in some bodily labour; but it is because they are averse to work, wherein they have so immediately to do with God; and they naturally love to keep at a distance from him.

3. Their *wills* are contrary to his will. God's will and theirs are exceeding cross the one to the other. God wills those things that they hate, and are most averse to; and they will those things that God hates. Hence they oppose God in their wills; there is a dreadful, violent, and obstinate opposition of the will of natural men, to the will of God.

They are very opposite to the commands of God. It is from the enmity of the will, (Rom. vii. 7,) that *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Hence natural men are enemies to God's government. They are not loyal subjects, but enemies to God, considered as Lord of the world. They are entire enemies to God's authority.

4. They are enemies to God in their *affections.* There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God. And it often dreadfully breaks forth. Though it may in great measure lie hid in secure times, when God lets men alone, and they meet with no great disturbance of body or mind; yet, if God does but touch men in their consciences, by manifesting to them a little of his wrath for their sins, this oftentimes brings out the principle of malice against him. This is exercised in dreadful heart-risings, inward wranglings and quarrellings, and blasphemous thoughts: wherein the heart is like a viper, hissing and spitting poison at God. And however free from it the heart may seem to be, when let alone and secure, yet a very little thing will set it in a rage. Temptations will show what is in the heart. The alteration of a man's circumstances will often discover the heart. Pharaoh had no more natural enmity against God than other men; and if other natural men had been in Pharaoh's circumstances, the same corruptions would have put forth themselves in as dreadful a manner. The Scribes and Pharisees had naturally no more malice in their hearts against Christ than other men; and other natural men would, in their case, and having as little restraint, exercise as much malice against Christ as they did. When wicked men come to be cast into hell, then their malice against God will appear. Then their hearts will appear as full of malice, as hell is full of fire. But when wicked men come to be in hell there will be no new corruptions put into their heart; but only old ones will then break forth without restraint. That is all the difference between a wicked man on earth and a

wicked man in hell, that in hell there will be more to stir up the exercise of corruption, and less to restrain it than on earth: but there will be no new corruption put in. A wicked man will have no principle of corruption in hell, but what he carried to hell with him. There are now the seeds of all the malice that will be exercised then. The malice of damned spirits is but a branch of the root, that is in the hearts of natural men now. A natural man has a heart, like the heart of a devil; only corruption is more under restraint in man than in devils.

5. They are enemies in their *practice*. *They walk contrary to him*. In their enmity against God, they are exceeding active. They are engaged in war against God. Indeed they cannot injure God, he is so much above them; but yet they do what they can. They oppose themselves to his honour and glory: they oppose themselves to the interest of his kingdom in the world: they oppose themselves to the will and command of God: and oppose him in his government. They oppose God in his works, and in his declared designs; while he is doing one work, they are doing the contrary. God seeks one thing, and they seek directly the contrary. They list under Satan's banner, and are his willing soldiers in opposing the kingdom of God.

Section. II.

The Degree of Men's Natural Enmity to God.

I now proceed to say something with respect to the *degree* of this enmity; tending in some measure to show, how great enemies to God are natural men.

1. They have *no love* to God; their enmity is mere enmity without any mixture of love. A natural man is wholly destitute of any principle of love to God, and therefore never had the least exercise of this love. Some natural men have better tempers than others; and some are better educated than others; and some live a great deal more soberly than others: but one has no more love to God than another; for none have the least spark of that. The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love to God, as a dead, stiff, cold corpse is of vital heat. John v. 43. *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

2. Every *faculty* and *principle* of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God. The nature of man is wholly infected with this enmity against God. He is tainted with it throughout, in all his faculties and principles. And not only so, but every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved to it. This enmity against God has the absolute possession of man. The apostle Paul, speaking of what he was naturally says, Rom. vii. 14, *I am carnal, sold under sin.*

The *understanding* is under the reigning power of this enmity against God, so that it is entirely darkened and blinded with regard to the glory and excellency of God. The *will* is wholly under the reigning power of it. All the *affections* are governed by enmity against God: there is not one affection, nor one desire that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God. A natural man is as full of enmity against God, as any viper, or any venomous beast is full of poison.

3. The power of the enmity of natural men against God, is so great that it is *insuperable* by any *finite* power. It has too great and strong a possession of the heart, to be overcome by any created power. Indeed, a natural man never sincerely strives to root out this enmity against God; his endeavours are hypocritical: he delights in his enmity, and chooses it. Neither can others do it, though they sincerely, and to their utmost, endeavour to overcome this enmity. If godly friends and neighbours labour to persuade them to cast away their enmity, and become friends to God, they cannot persuade them to it. Though ministers use never so many arguments and entreaties, and set forth the loveliness of God; tell them of the goodness of God to them, hold forth God's own gracious invitations, and intreat them never so earnestly to cast off their opposition, and be reconciled; yet they cannot overcome it; still they will be as bad enemies to God as ever they were.—The tongue of men or of angels cannot persuade them to relinquish their opposition to God. Miracles will not do it.—How many miracles did the children of Israel see in the wilderness! yet their enmity against God remained; as appeared by their often murmuring. And how often did Christ use miracles to this end without effect, but the Jews obstinately stood out. Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And how great did the enmity of these people appear to be after all; how spiteful and venomous were their hearts towards Christ, as appears by their cruel treatment of him, in his last sufferings!

4. They are *mortal* enemies to God; *i. e.* they have that enmity in their hearts, that strikes at the life of God. A man may be no friend to another, and may have an ill spirit towards him; and yet not be his mortal enemy: his enmity will be satisfied with something short of the death of the person. But it is not so with natural men, with respect to God: they are mortal enemies. Their imbecility is no argument that this is not the tendency of the principle.

Natural men are enemies to the dominion of God; and their nature shows their good will to dethrone him if they could! Yea, they are enemies to the being of God, and would be glad if there was no God. And therefore it necessarily follows, that they would cause that there should be none, if they could. Psalm xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." This implies not only an aptness to question the being of God; but that he inclines it should be so. His *heart* says, *i. e.* his *inclination* says. The words in the original are, "The fool hath said in his heart, no God." That is, I would have none, I do not desire any, I wish there was none; that would suit my inclination best. Let the world be emptied of a God, he stands in my way. And hence he is an Atheist in his heart.

The viper's poison is deadly poison; and when he bites he seeks the precious life. And men are in this respect a generation of vipers. Their poison, which is enmity against God, seeks the life of God. Matt. iii. 7. "O generation of vipers." —Psalm lviii. 3, 4. "The wicked are estranged from the womb —Their poison is like the poison of a serpent." Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. "For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are the grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their vine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." The divine nature being immortal, and infinitely out of our reach, there is no other trial possible, whether the enmity that is naturally in the heart against God, be mortal or no, but only for God to take on him the human nature, and become man; so as to come within man's reach. There can be no other experiment. And what has been the event? Why, when once God became man, and came down to dwell here, among such vipers as fallen men, they hated and persecuted him; and never desisted till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There was a multitude of them that appeared combined in this design. Nothing would do, but he must be put to death. All cry out, *Crucify him*, *crucify him*, *Away with him*. They had rather Barabbas who had greatly deserved death, should live, than he should not die. Nothing would restrain them from it; even all his preaching, and all his miracles: but they would kill him. And it was not the ordinary kind of execution that would satisfy them, but it must be the most cruel, and the most ignominious they possibly could invent. And they aggravated it as much as they could, by mocking him, and spitting on him, and scourging him. This shows what the nature and tendency of man's enmity against God is; here it appeared in its true colours.

5. Natural men are greater enemies to God, than they are to any other being whatsoever. Natural men may be very great

enemies to their fellow-creatures; but not so great as they are to God. There is no other being that so much stands in sinners' way, in those things that they chiefly set their hearts upon, as God. Men are wont to hate their enemies in proportion to two things, *viz.* their opposition to what they look upon to be their interest,—and their power and ability. A great and powerful enemy, will be more hated, than one who is weak and impotent. But none is so powerful as God.

Man's enmity to others may be got over: time may wear it out, and they may be reconciled. But natural men, without a mighty work of God to change their hearts, will never get over their enmity against God. They are greater enemies to God, than they are to the devil. Yea, they treat the devil as their friend and master, and join with him against God.—John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning."

Section III.

On what Account are Men Enemies to God?

The general reason is, that God is opposite to them in the worship of their idols. The apostacy of man summarily consists in departing from the true God, to idols; forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room. When God at first created man, he was united to his Creator; the God that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that ruled over all other principles; and every thing in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between his heart and his Creator was broken: he wholly lost his principle of love to God. And henceforward man clave to other gods. He gave that respect to the creature, which is due to the Creator.—When God ceased to be the object of his supreme love and respect, other things of course became the objects of it.

Man will necessarily have something that he respects as his god. If man do not give his highest respect to the God that made him, there will be something else that has the possession of it. Men will either worship the true God, or some idol: it is impossible it should be otherwise; something will have the heart of man. And that which a man gives his heart to, may be called his god; and therefore when man, by the fall, extinguished all love to the true God, he set up the creature in his room. For having lost his esteem and love of the true God,

and set up other gods in his room, and in opposition to him; and God still demanding their worship, and opposing them, enmity necessarily follows.

That which a man chooses for his god, he sets his heart mainly upon. And nothing will so soon excite enmity, as opposition in that which is dearest. A man will be the greatest enemy to him who opposes him in what he chooses for his god: he will look on none as standing so much in his way, as he that would deprive him of his god. Judg. xviii. 24. "Ye have taken away my gods; and what have I more?" A man in this respect, cannot serve two masters, that stand in competition for his service. And not only, if he serves one, he cannot serve the other; but if he cleaves to one, he will necessarily hate the other. Matt. vi.24. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And this is the very reason that men hate God. In this case it is, as when two kings set up in one kingdom, in opposition one to the other; and they both challenge the same throne, and are competitors for the same crown: they who are loyal, hearty subjects to the one, will necessarily be enemies to the other. As that which is a man's god, is the object of his highest love; so that God who chiefly opposes him in it, must be the object of his greatest hatred.

The gods which a natural man worships, instead of the God that made him, are himself and the world. He has withdrawn his esteem and honour from God, and proudly exalts himself. As Satan was not willing to be in subjection, and therefore rebelled, and set up himself; so a natural man, in the proud and high thoughts he has of himself, sets up himself upon God's throne. He gives his heart to the world, worldly riches, worldly pleasures, and worldly honours; they have the possession of that regard which is due to God. The apostle sums up all the idolatry of wicked men in their love of the world. 1John ii. 15,16. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the apostle James observes, that a man must necessarily be the enemy of the true God, if he be a friend of the world. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." Jam. iv.4.

All the sin that men commit, is what they do in the service of their idols; there is no one act of sin, but what is an act of service to some false god. And therefore wherein soever God opposes sin in them, he is opposite to their worship of their idols; on which account they are his enemies. God opposes them in their service of their idols, in the following respects.

1. He manifests his utter *abhorrence* of their attachment to their idols. Their idols are what they love above all things: they would by no means part with them. This wickedness is sweet unto them, Job xx. 12. If you take them away, what have they more? If they lose their idols, they lose their all.—To rend away their idols from them, would be more grievous to them, than to rend body and soul asunder; it is like rending their heart in twain. They love their idolatry: but God does not approve of it, but exceedingly hates it: he will by no means be reconciled to it; and therefore they hate him. God declares an infinite hatred of every act they do in the service of their false gods. He declares himself to be a holy and a jealous God; a God who is very jealous of his own honour, and that greatly abhors giving that honour to another.

2. He utterly *forbids* their cleaving to those idols, and all the service that they do them. He not only shows that he dislikes it, but he utterly forbids it; and demands that they should worship him; serve him only, and give their hearts wholly to him; without tolerating any competitor. He allows them to serve their idols in no degree; but requires them to cast them away *utterly*, and pay no more worship to them, at any time. He requires a *final* parting with their idols. Not only that they should refrain from them for awhile, but cast them away for ever; and never gratify their idolatrous respect to them any more. This is so exceeding contrary to them, and what they are so averse to, that they are enemies to God for it. They cannot endure God's commands, because they forbid all that in which their hearts are so engaged. And as they hate God's commands, so they hate him whose commands they are.

3. He *threatens* them with everlasting damnation for their service of their idols. He threatens them for their *past* idolatry. He threatens them with his eternal wrath, for their having departed from him, and their having chosen to themselves other gods. He threatens them for that *disposition* they have in their hearts to cleave to other gods: he threatens the least degrees of that respect which they have in their hearts to their idols. He manifests that he will not tolerate any regard to them, but has fixed eternal death as the wages of every degree of it. And he will not release them from their guilt; he holds them to their obligations; and he will accept of no atonement that they can make. He will not forgive them for whatever they do in religion; whatever pains they take; whatever tears they shed. He will accept of no money or price that they have to offer.

And he threatens every *future* act of their idolatry. He not only forbids them ever to be guilty of the least act, but forbids them on pain of eternal damnation. So strictly does God prohibit them from the service of their beloved idols! He threatens them with everlasting wrath for all exercises of inordinate love

of worldly profit; for all manifestations of inordinate regard to worldly pleasures, or worldly honours. He threatens them with everlasting torments for their self-exaltation. He requires them to deny and renounce themselves, and to abase themselves at his feet, on pain of bearing his wrath to all eternity.

The strictness of God's law is a principal cause of man's enmity against God. If God were one that did not so much hate sin; if he would allow them in the gratification of their lusts, in some degree; and his threatenings were not so awful against all criminal indulgence; if his threatenings were not so absolute; if his displeasure could be appeased by a few tears, a little reformation, or the like; they would not be so great enemies, nor hate him so much as they do. But God shows himself to be an implacable enemy to their idols, and has threatened everlasting wrath, infinite calamity, for all that they do in the service of their lusts; and this makes them irreconcilable enemies to him.

For this reason, the scribes and Pharisees were such bitter enemies to Christ; because he showed himself to be such an enemy to their pride, conceit of their own wisdom, self-righteousness, and inordinate affection of their own honour, which was their god. Natural men are enemies to God, because he is so opposite to them, in that in which they place their all. If you go to take away that which is very dear to a man, nothing will provoke him more. God is infinitely opposite to that in which natural men place all their delight, and all their happiness. He is an enemy to that which natural men value as their greatest honour and highest dignity; and to which they wholly trust, *viz.* their own righteousness.

Hence natural men are greater enemies to God, than they are to any other being. Some of their fellow-creatures may stand very much in their way, with regard to some things on which they set their hearts; but God opposes them with respect to ALL their idols, and his opposition to them is infinitely great. None of our fellow-creatures ever oppose us in any of our interests so much as God opposes wicked men in their idolatry. His infinite opposition is manifested by his threatening an infinite punishment, *viz.* his dreadful wrath to all eternity, misery without end. Hence we need not wonder that natural men are enemies to God.

SECTION IV.

The Objection, that Men are not conscious of this Enmity, answered.

NATURAL men do not generally conceive themselves to be so bad; they have not this notion of themselves, that they are enemies to God. And therefore, when they hear such doctrine as

this taught them, they stand ready to make objections. Some may be ready to say, "I do not know, I am not sensible, that I hate God, and have a mortal enmity against him. I feel no such thing in myself, and if I have such enmity, why do not I feel it? If I am a mortal enemy, why should not I know it better than any body else? How can others see what is in my heart, better than I myself? If I hate one of my fellow-creatures, I can feel it inwardly working." To such an objection I would answer.

1. If you do but observe yourself, and search your own heart, unless you are strangely blinded, you may be sensible of those things, wherein enmity does fundamentally consist. Particularly, you may be sensible that you have at least had a low and contemptible estimation of God: and that, in your esteem, you set the trifles and vanities of this world far above him; so as to regard the enjoyment of these things far above the enjoyment of God, and to value these things better than his love.—And you may be sensible that you despise the *authority* of God and value his commands and his honour but very little. Or if by some means you have blinded yourself so as to think you do regard them now, doubtless you can look back and see that you have not regarded them. You may be sensible that you have had a disrelish and aversion towards God; an opposition to thinking of him; so that it would have been a very uncomfortable task to have been confined to that exercise for any time. The vanities of the world, at the same time, have been very pleasing to you; and you have been all swallowed up in them, while you have been averse to the things of religion. If you look into your heart, it is there plain to be seen, that there is an enmity in your *will*, that it is contrary to God's will, for you have been opposing the will of God all your life long.—These things are plain; it is nothing but some great delusion that can hide them from you. These are the foundation of all enmity; and if these things be in you, all the rest that we have spoken of will follow of course.

2. One reason why you have not more sensibly felt the exercises of malice against God, is, that your enmity is now exercised partly in your unbelief of God's being; and this prevents its appearing in other ways. Man has naturally a principle of Atheism in him: an indisposition to realize God's being, and a disposition to doubt of it. The being of God does not ordinarily seem real to natural men. All the discoveries that there are of God's being in his works, will not overcome the principle of Atheism in the heart. And though they seem in some measure to be rationally convinced, yet it does not appear real; the conviction is faint, there is no strong conviction impressed on the mind, that there is a God: and oftentimes they are ready to think that there is none. Now this will prevent the exercise of this enmity, which otherwise would be felt; particularly, it may be an occasion of there not being sensible exercises of hatred.

It may in some measure be thus illustrated: If you had a rooted malice against another man, a principle that had been long established there, and if you should hear that he was dead, the sensible workings of your malice would not be felt, as when you realized it that he was alive. But if you should afterward hear the news contradicted, and perceive that your enemy was still alive; you would feel the same workings of hatred that you did before. And thus you are not realizing the fact, that God has a being, may prevent those sensible workings of hatred, that otherwise you would have. If wicked men in this world were sensible of the reality of God's being, as the wicked are in another, they would feel more of that hatred, which men in another world do. The exercise of corruption in one way, may, and often does prevent it working in other ways. As covetousness may prevent the exercise of pride, so Atheism may prevent malice; and yet it may be no argument of there being any less enmity in the heart; for it is the same enmity, working in another way. The same enmity that in this world works by Atheism, will in another world, where there will be no room for Atheism, work by malice and blasphemy. The same mortal enmity which, if you saw there was a God, might make you to *wish* there were none, may now dispose and incline you to think there is none. Men are very often apt to think things are, as they would have them to be. The same principle disposes you to think God has no existence, which, if you knew he had, would dispose you, if it were possible, to dispossess him of it.

If you think that there is a God, yet you do not realize it, that he is such a God, as he really is. You do not realize it, that he is so holy as he is; that he has such a hatred of sin as indeed he has; that he is so just a God as he is, who will by no means clear the guilty. But that in the Psalms is applicable to you: *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.* Psalm i. 21. So that your Atheism appears in this, as well as in thinking there is no God. So that your objection arises from this, that you do not find such a sensible hatred against that God which you have formed to suit yourself; a God that you like better than the true God. But this is no argument that you have not bitter enmity against the true God, for it was your enmity against the true God, and your not liking him, that has put you upon forming up another in your imagination, that you like better. It is your enmity against those attributes of God's holiness and justice, and the like, that has put you upon conceiting another, who is not so holy as he is, and does not hate sin so much, and will not be so strictly just in punishing it; and whose wrath against sin is not so terrible.

But if you were sensible of the vanity of your own conceits, and that God was not such an one as you have imagined; but that he is, as he is indeed, an infinitely holy, just, sin hating and

sin revenging God, who will not tolerate nor endure the worship of idols, you would be much more liable to feel the sensible exercises of enmity against him, than you are now. And this experience confirms. For we see that when men come to be under convictions, and to be made sensible that God is not as they have heretofore imagined; but that he is such a jealous, sin hating God, and whose wrath against sin is so dreadful, they are much more apt to have sensible exercises of enmity against him than before.

4. Your having always been taught that God is infinitely above you, and out of your reach, has prevented your enmity being exercised in those ways, that otherwise it would have been. And hence your enmity has not been exercised in revengeful thoughts; because revenge has never found any room here; it has never found any handle to take hold of; there has been no conception of any such thing, and hence it has lain still. A serpent will not bite, or spit poison at that which it sees at a great distance; which if it saw near would do it immediately. Opportunity often shows what men are, whether friends or enemies. Opportunity to do puts men in mind of doing; wakens up such principles as lay dormant before. Opportunity stirs up desire to do, where there was before a disposition, that without opportunity, would have lain still. If a man has had an old grudge against another, and has a fair opportunity to be revenged, this will revive his malice, and waken up a desire of revenge.

If a great and sovereign prince injures a poor man, and what he does is looked upon as very cruel, that will not ordinarily stir up passionate revenge, because he is so much above him, and out of his reach. Many a man has appeared calm and meek, when he has had no power in his hands, and has not appeared, either to himself or others, to have any disposition to cruel acts; yet afterward when he came to have opportunity by unexpected advancement, or otherwise, has appeared like a ravenous wolf, or devouring lion. So it was with Hazael. "And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. Hazael was then a servant; he had no power in his hands to do as he pleased; and so his cruel disposition had lain hid, and he did not himself imagine that it was there: but afterward, when he became king of Syria, and was absolute, having none to control him; then it broke out and appeared, and he did as the prophet had foretold. He committed those very acts of cruelty,

that he thought it was not in his heart to do. It was want of opportunity that made the difference. It was all in his heart before; he was such a dog *then* as to do this thing, but only had not opportunity. And therefore when he seems surprised that the prophet should say so of him, all the reason the prophet gives is, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

Some natural men are such "dogs" as to do things, if they had opportunity, which they do not imagine it is in their hearts to do. You object against your having a mortal hatred against God; that you never felt any desire to dethrone him. But one reason has been, that it has always been conceived so impossible by you. But if the throne of God were within your reach, and you knew it, it would not be safe one hour. Who knows what thoughts would presently arise in your heart by such an opportunity, and what disposition would be raised up in your heart? Who would trust your heart, that there would not presently be such thoughts as these, though they are enough to make one tremble to mention them? "Now I have opportunity to set myself at liberty—that I need not be kept in continual slavery by the strict law of God—Then I may take my liberty to walk in that way I like best, and need not be continually in such slavish fear of God's displeasure. And God has not done well by me in many instances. He has done most unjustly by me, in holding me bound to destruction for unbelief, and other things which I cannot help—He has shown mercy to others, and not to me. I have now an opportunity to deliver myself, and there can be no danger of my being hurt for it. There will be nothing for us to be terrified about, and so keep us in slavery.

Who would trust your heart, that such thoughts would not arise? or others much more horrid and too dreadful to be mentioned! And therefore I forbear. Those natural men are foolishly insensible of what is in their own hearts, who think there would be no danger of any such workings of heart, if they knew they had opportunity.

5. You little consider, how much your having no more of the sensible exercises of hatred to God, is owing to a being restrained by fear. You have always been taught what a dreadful thing it is to hate God, and how terrible his displeasure; that God sees the heart and knows all the thoughts; and that you are in his hands, and he can make you as miserable as he pleases, and as soon as he pleases. And these things have restrained you: and the fear that has risen from them, has kept you from appearing what you are; it has kept down your enmity and made that serpent afraid to show its head, as otherwise it would do. If a wrathful man were wholly under the power of an enemy, he would be afraid to exercise his hatred in outward acts, unless it were with great disguise. And if it be supposed

that such an enemy, in whose power he was, could see his heart, and know all his thoughts; and apprehended that he would put him to a terrible death, if he saw the workings of malice there, how greatly would this restrain! He would be afraid so much as to believe himself, that he hated his enemy: but there would be all manner of disguise and hyprocrisy, and feigning even of thoughts and affections.

Thus your enmity has been kept under *restraint;* and thus it has been from your infancy. You have grown up in it, so that it is become an *habitual* restraint. You dare not so much as think that you hate God. If you do exercise hatred, you have a disguise for it, whereby you endeavour even to hide it from your own conscience; and so have all along deceived yourself. Your deceit is very old and habitual: There has been only restraint; not mortification. There has been an enmity against God in its full strength. It has been only restrained, like an enemy that durst not rise up and show himself.

6. One reason why you have not felt more sensible hatred to God may be, because you have not had much trial of what is in your heart. It may be God has hitherto, in a great measure, let you alone. The enmity that is in men's hearts against God, is like a serpent, which, if it be let alone, lies still: but if any body disturbs it; will soon hiss, and be enraged, and show its serpentine spiteful nature.

Notwithstanding the good opinion you have of yourself yet a little trial would show you to be a viper, and your heart would be set all on rage against God. One thing that restrains you now is your hope. You hope to receive many things from God. Your own interest is concerned. So that both hope and fear operate together, to restrain your enmity from sensible exercises. But if once hope were gone, you would soon show what you were: you would feel your enmity against God in a rage.

7. If you pretend that you do not feel enmity against God, and yet act as an enemy, you may certainly conclude that it is not because you are no enemy; but because you do not know your own heart. Actions are the best interpreters of the disposition: they show, better than any thing else, what the heart is. It must be because you do not observe your own behaviour, that you question whether you are an enemy to God.

What other account can you give of your own carriage, but only your being God's enemy? What other account can be given of your opposing God in your ways; walking so exceeding contrary to him, contrary to his counsels, contrary to his commands, and contrary to his glory? What other account can be given of your casting so much contempt upon God; your setting him so low; your acting so much against his authority, and against his kingdom and interest in the world? What other account can be given of your so setting your will in opposition to

God's will, and that so obstinately, for so long a time, against so many warnings as you have had? What other account can be given of your joining so much with Satan, in the opposition he is making to the kingdom of God in the world? And that you will join with him against God, though it be so much against your own interest, and though you expose yourself by it to everlasting misery?

Such like behaviour in one man towards another, would be sufficient evidence of enmity. If he should be seen to behave thus, and that it was his constant manner, none would want better evidence that he was an enemy to his neighbour. If you yourself had a servant that carried it towards you, as you do towards God, you would not think there was need of any greater evidence of his being your enemy. Suppose your servant should manifest much contempt of you; and disregard your commands as much as you do the commands of God; should go directly contrary, and in many ways act the very reverse of your commands; should seem to set himself in ways that were contrary to your will obstinately and incorrigibly, without any amendment from your repeated calls, warnings, and threatenings; and should act so cross to you day and night, as you do to God: would he not be justly deemed your enemy? Suppose, further, when you sought one thing, he would seek the contrary; when you did any work, he would, as much as in him lay, undo and destroy that work; and suppose he should continually drive at such ends, as tended to overthrow the ends you aimed at: when you sought to bring to pass any design, he would endeavour to overthrow your design; and set himself as much against your interest as you do yourself against God's honour. And suppose you should moreover see him, from time to time, with those who were your declared mortal enemies; making them his counsellors, and hearkening to their counsels, as much as you do to Satan's temptations: should you not think you had sufficient evidence that he was your enemy;—Therefore consider seriously your own ways, and weigh your own behaviour. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted?—see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done.* Jer. ii. 23.

Section V.

The Objections, that they show respect to God, and experience some Religious Affections, answered.

Natural men may be ready to object, the *respect* they show to God, from time to time. This makes many to think that they are far from being such enemies to God. They pray to him in secret, and attend on public worship, and take a great

deal of pains to do it in a decent manner. It seems to them that they show God a great deal of respect: they use many very respectful terms in their prayer: they are respectful in their manner of speaking, their voice, gestures, and the like.—But to this I answer, That all this is done in mere hypocrisy. All this seeming respect is feigned, there is no sincerity in it: there is external respect, but none in the heart: there is a show, and nothing else. You only cover your enmity with a painted veil. You put on the disguise of a friend, but in your heart you are a mortal enemy. There is external honour, but inward contempt; there is a show of friendship and regard, but inward hatred. You do but deceive yourself with your show of respect; and endeavour to deceive God: not considering that God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.—Here consider particularly,

1. That much of that seeming respect which natural men show to God, is owing to their education. They have been taught from their infancy that they ought to show great respect to God. They have been taught to use respectful language, when speaking about God, and to behave with solemnity, when attending on those exercises of religion, wherein they have to do with him. From their childhood, they have seen that this is the manner of others, when they pray to God; to use reverential expressions and a reverential behaviour before him.

Those who are brought up in places where they have commonly from their infancy, heard men take the name of God in vain, and swear and curse, and blaspheme; they learn to do the same; and it becomes habitual to them. And it is the same way, and no other, that you have learned to behave respectfully towards God; not that you have any more respect to God than they; but they have been brought up one way, and you another. In some parts of the world, men are brought up in the worship of idols of silver, and gold, and wood, and stone, made in the shape of men and beasts. *They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calf.* Hos. xiii. 2. In some parts of the world, they are brought up to worship serpents, and are taught from their infancy to show great respect to them. And in some places they are brought up in worshipping the devil, who appears to them in a bodily shape; and to behave with a show of great reverence and honour towards him. And what respect you show to God has no better foundation; it comes the same way, and is worth no more.

2. That show of respect which you make is forced. You come to God, and make a great show of respect to him, and use very respectful terms, with a reverential tone and manner of speaking; and your countenance is grave and solemn: you put on an humble aspect; and use humble, respectful postures, out of fear. You are afraid that God will execute his wrath upon

you, and so you feign a great deal of respect, that he may not be angry with you. *Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.* Ps. lxvi. 3. In the original it is, *Shall thine enemies lie to thee.* It is rendered therefore in the margin, *shall yield feigned obedience unto thee.* All that you do in religion is forced and feigned. Through the the greatness of God's power, you yield feigned obedience. You are in God's power, and he is able to destroy you ; and so you feign a great deal of respect to him, that he might not destroy you. As one might do towards an enemy that had taken him captive, though he at the same time would gladly make his escape, if he could, by taking away the life of him who had taken him captive.

3. It is not real respect that moves you to behave so towards God : you do it because you hope you shall get by it. It is respect to yourself, and not respect to God, that moves you. You hope to move God by it to bestow the rewards of his children. You are like the Jews who followed Christ, and called him Rabbi, and would make him a king. Not that they honoured him so much in their hearts, as to think him worthy of the honour of a king ; or that they had the respect of sincere subjects ; but they did it for the sake of the loaves. *Jesus perceived that they would come and make him a king. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, how camest thou hither? Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* John vi. 15, 25, 26.

These things do not argue but that you are implacable enemies to God. If you examine your prayers and other duties, your own consciences will tell you, that the seeming respect which you have shown to God in them, has been only in hypocrisy. Oftentimes you have set forth in your prayers, that God was a great, a glorious, and an infinitely holy God, as if you greatly honoured him on the account of these attributes ; and, at the same time, you had no sense in your heart of the greatness and glory of God, or of any excellency in his holiness. Your own consciences will tell you, that you have often pretended to be thankful ; you have told God, that you thanked him you was alive, and thanked him for various mercies, when you have not found the least jot of thankfulness in your heart. And so you have told God of your own unworthiness, and set forth what a vile creature you was ; when you have had no humble sense of your own unworthiness.

If these forementioned restraints were thrown off, you would soon throw off all your show of respect. Take away fear, and a regard to your own interest, and there would soon be an end to all those appearances of love, honour, and reverence, which now you make. All these things are not at all inconsisten

with the most implacable enmity. The devil himself made a show of respect to Christ, when he was afraid that he was going to torment him; and when he hoped to persuade Christ to spare him longer. *When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.* Luke viii. 28.

Some may perhaps object against this doctrine of their being God's enemies, the *religious affections* they have sometimes experienced. They may be ready to say, That when they have come before God in prayer, they have not only used respectful terms and gestures, but they have prayed with affection; their prayers have been attended with tears, which they are ready to think showed something in the heart.—But to this it is answered, that these affections have risen from other causes, and not from any true respect to God.

1. They have risen from self-love, and not love to God. If you have wept before God, from the consideration of your own pitiful case; that has been because you loved yourself, and not because you had any respect to God. And if your tears have been from sorrow for your sins; you have mourned for your sins, because you have sinned against yourself, and not because you have sinned against God. *When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto Me?* Zech. vii. 5.

2. Pride, and a good thought of themselves, very commonly has a great hand in the affections of natural men. They have a good opinion of what they are doing when they are praying; and the reflection on that affects them: they are affected with their own goodness. Men's self-righteousness often occasions tears. A high opinion of themselves before God, and an imagination of their being persons of great account with him, has affected them in their transactions with God. There is commonly abundance of pride in the midst of tears; and often pride is in a great measure the source of them. And then they are so far from being an argument that you are not an enemy to God, that on the contrary, they are an argument, that you are. In your very tears, you are, in a vain conceit of yourself, exalting yourself against God.

3. The affections of natural men often arise from wrong notions they have of God. They conceive of God after the manner they do of men, as though he were a being liable to be wrought upon in his affections. They conceive of him as one whose heart could be drawn, whose affections can be overcome, by what he sees in them. They conceive of him as being taken with them and their performances; and this works on their affections; and thus one tear draws another, and their affections increase by reflection. And oftentimes they conceive of God as one that loves them, and is a friend to them; and such a mis-

take may work much on their affections. But such affections that arise towards God, as they conceit him to be, is no argument that they have not the same implacable hatred towards God, considered as he really is. There is no concluding that men are not enemies, because they are affected and shed tears in their prayers, and the like. Saul was very much affected when David expostulated with him about pursuing after him, and seeking to kill him. David's words wrought exceedingly upon Saul's affections. *And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lift up his voice and wept.* I Sam. xxiv. 16. chap. xxvi. 1, &c. He was so affected that he wept aloud, and called David his son, though he was but just before seeking his life. But this affection of Saul was no argument that he did not still continue in his enmity against David. He was David's mortal enemy before, and sought his life; and so he did afterward. It was but a pang; his enmity was not mortified or done away. The next news we hear of Saul is, that he was pursuing David, and seeking his life again.

Section VI.

Restraining Grace a great Privilege.

If natural men are God's enemies; then hence we may learn, how much we are indebted to God for his restraining grace. If all natural men are God's enemies, what would they do, if they were not restrained? For what has one that is an enemy in his disposition, to restrain him from acting against him to whom he is an enemy? Hatred will not restrain a man from acting any thing against him that is hated. Nothing is too bad for hatred, if it be mere hatred and no love. Hatred shows no kindness either in doing, or forbearing; it will never make a man forbear to act against God; for the very nature of hatred is to seek evil. But wicked men, as has been shown, are mere enemies to God; they have hatred, without any love at all. And hence natural men have nothing within them, in their own nature, to restrain them from any thing that is bad; and therefore their restraint must not be owing to nature, but to restraining grace. And therefore whatever wickedness we have been kept from, it is not because we have not been bad enough to commit it; but it is God has restrained us, and kept us back from sin. There can be no worse principle, than a principle of hatred to God. And there can be no principle that will go further in wickedness that this, if it be neither mortified nor restrained. But it is not mortified in natural men; and therefore all that keeps them from any degree of wickedness, is restrained. If we have seen others do things that we never did; and if they have done worse than we, this is owing to restraining grace. If

we have not done as bad as Pharaoh, it is owing to divine restraints. If we have not done as bad as Judas, or as the scribes and Pharisees, or as bad as Herod, or Simon Magus, it is because God has restrained our corruption. If we have ever heard or read of any that have done worse than we; if we have not gone the length in sinning, that the most wicked pirates or carnal persecutors have gone, this is owing to restraining grace. For we are all naturally the enemies of God as much as they. If we have not committed the unpardonable sin, it is owing to restraining grace. There is no worse principle in exercise in that sin, than enmity against God. There is the entire fountain, and all the foundation of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in that enmity against God that naturally reigns in us.

It is not we that restrain ourselves from the commission of the greatest imaginable wickedness; for enmity against God reigns in us and over us; we are under its power and dominion, and are sold under it. We do not restrain that which reigns over us. A slave, as long as he continues a mere slave, cannot control his master. "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii. 34. So that the restraint of this our cruel tyrant, is owing to God, and not to us. What does a poor, impotent subject do to restrain the absolute Lord, that has him wholly under his power? How much will it appear that the world is indebted to the restraining grace of God, if we consider that the world is full of enemies to God. The world is full of inhabitants; and almost all are God's enemies, his implacable and mortal enemies. What therefore would they not do; what work would they not make; if God did not restrain them?

God's work in the restraint that he exercises over a wicked world, is a glorious work. God's holding the reins upon the corruptions of a wicked world, and setting bounds to their wickedness, is a more glorious work, than his ruling the raging of the sea, and setting bounds to its proud waves, and saying, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. In hell, God lets the wickedness of wicked spirits have the reins, to rage without restraint; and it would be in a great measure upon earth as it is in hell, did not God restrain the wickedness of the world. But in order to the better understanding how it is owing to the restraining grace of God, that we are kept and withheld from the highest acts of sin, I would here observe several things.

1. Whenever men are withheld from sinning by the common influence of God's Spirit, they are withheld by restraining grace. If sinners are awakened, and are made sensible of the great guilt that sin brings, and that it exposes to a dreadful punishment; under such circumstances they dare not allow themselves in wilful sin; God restrains them by the convictions of his Spirit; and therein their being kept from sin, is owing to

restraining grace. And unawakened sinners that live under the gospel, who are in a great measure secure, commonly have some degrees of the influence of God's Spirit, with his ordinances influencing natural conscience. And though they be not sufficient thoroughly to rouse them out of security, or make them reform; yet they keep them from going such lengths in sin, as otherwise they might do. And this is restraining grace. They are indeed very stupid and sottish; yet they would be a great deal more so, if God should let them wholly alone.

2. All the restraints that men are under from the word and ordinances, is from grace. The word and ordinances of God might have some degree of influence on men's natural principles of self-love, to restrain them from sin, without any degree of the influence of God's Spirit; but this would be the restraining grace of God; for God's goodness and mercy to a sinful world appears in his giving his word to be a restraint on the wickedness of the world. When men are restrained by fear of those punishments that the word of God threatens; or by the warnings, the offers, and promises of it; when the word of God works upon hope, or fear, or natural conscience, to restrain men from sin, this is the restraining grace of God, and is owing to his mercy. It is an instance of God's mercy that he has revealed hell, to restrain men's wickedness; and that he has revealed a way of salvation, and a possibility of eternal life. This, which has great influence on men to keep them from sin, is the restraining grace of God.

3. When men are restrained from sin, by the light of nature, this also is of grace. If men are destitute of the light of God's word, yet the light of natural conscience teaches that sin brings guilt and exposes to punishment. The light of nature teaches that there is a God who governs the world, and will reward the good and punish the evil. God is the author of the light of nature, as well as the light of revelation. He in mercy to mankind makes known many things by natural light to work upon men's fear and self-love, in order to restrain their corruptions.

4. When God restrains men's corruptions by his providence, this is from grace. And that whether it be his general providence in ordering the state of mankind; or his providential disposals towards them in particular.

(1.) God greatly restrains the corruption of the world, by ordering the state of mankind. He hath set them here in a *mortal* state, and in a state of *probation* for eternity; and that is a great restraint to corruption. God hath so ordered the state of mankind, that ordinarily many kinds of sin and wickedness are *disgraceful*, and what tend to the hurt of a man's character and reputation amongst his fellow-men; and that is a great restraint. He hath so disposed the world, that many kinds of wickedness are many ways very contrary to men's temporal *interest*; and

mankind are led to prohibit many kinds of wickedness by human laws; and that is a great restraint. God hath set up a church in the world, made up of those who, if they are answerable to their profession, have the fear and love of God in their hearts; and they, by holding forth revealed light, by keeping up the ordinances of God, and by warning others, are a great restraint to the wickedness of the world.

In all these things, the restraining grace of God appears. It is God's mercy to mankind, that he has so ordered their state, that they should have so many things, by fear and a regard to their own interest, to restrain their corruptions. It is God's mercy to the world, that the state of mankind here differs from the state of the damned in hell; where men will have none of these things to restrain them. The wisdom of God, as well as the attributes of his grace, greatly appear in thus disposing things for the restraining of the wickedness of men.

(2.) God greatly restrains the corruptions of men by his providence towards particular persons; by placing men in such circumstances as to lay them under restraints. And to this it is often owing that some natural men never go such lengths in sinning, or are never guilty of such atrocious wickedness as some others, that Providence has placed them in different circumstances. If it were not for this, many thousands of natural men, who now live sober and orderly, would do as Pharaoh did. The reason why they do not, is, that providence has placed them in different circumstances. If they were in the same circumstances as Pharaoh was in, they would do as he did. And so, if in the same circumstances as Manasseh, as Judas, or Nero. But Providence restrains their corruptions, by putting them in such circumstances, as not to open such a door or outlet for their corruption, as he did to them. So some do not perpetrate such horrid things, they do not live such horribly vicious lives as some others, because Providence has restrained them, by ordering that they should have a better education than others. Providence has ordered that they should be the children of pious parents, it may be, or should live where they should enjoy many means of grace; and so Providence has laid them under restraints. Now this is restraining grace; or the attribute of God's grace exercised in thus restraining persons.

And oftentimes God restrains men's corruptions by particular events of providence. By particular afflictions they are brought under, or by particular occurrences, whereby God does, as it were, block up men's way in their course of sin, or in some wickedness that they had devised, and that otherwise they would perpetrate. Or something happens unexpected to hold men back from that which they were about to commit. Thus God restrained David by his providence from shedding blood, as he intended to do. "Now, therefore, my Lord, as the Lord liveth,

and as thy soul liveth, *seeing the Lord hath withholden* thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand?" (1 Sam. xxv. 26.) God withheld him from it in no otherwise, than by ordering it so in his providence that Abigail should come and by her wisdom should cool, pacify, and persuade him to alter his purpose. See ver. 32, 33, 34.

5. Godly persons are greatly indebted to restraining grace, in keeping them from dreadful acts of sin. So it was in that instance of David, just mentioned. Even godly persons, when God has left, and has not restrained them, have fallen into dreadful acts of sin. So did David, in the case of Uriah, and Lot, and Peter. And when other godly persons are kept from falling into such sins, or much worse sins than these, it is owing to the restraining grace of God. Merely having a principle of grace in their hearts, or merely their being godly persons, without God's presence to restrain them, will not keep them from great acts of sin. That the godly do not fall into the most horrid sins that can be conceived of, is owing not so much to any inconsistence between their falling into such sins, and the having a principle of grace in the heart, as it is owing to the covenant mercy of God, whereby he has promised never to leave nor forsake his people, and that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; but with the temptation will make a way for them to escape. If saving grace restrains men from great acts of sin, this is owing to God who gives such exercise of grace at that time when the temptation comes that they are restrained.

Let not the godly therefore be insensible of their obligations to the restraining grace of God. Though they cannot be said to be enemies to God, because a principle of enmity does not reign; yet they have the very same principle and seed of enmity in them, though it be mortified. Though it be not in reigning power, yet it has great strength; and is too strong for them, without God's almighty power to help them against it. Though they be not enemies to God, because they have a principle of love; yet their old man, the body of sin and death that yet remains in them, is a mortal enemy to God. Corruption in the godly, is not better than it is in the wicked; but is of as bad a nature every whit, as that which is in a mortal enemy to God. And though it be not in reigning power; yet it would dreadfully rage were it not for God's restraining grace.

God gives his restraining grace to both natural and godly men; but there is this difference; he gives his restraining grace to his children in the way of covenant mercy: it is part of the mercy promised in his covenant. God is faithful, and will not leave them to sin in the like manner as wicked men do; otherwise they would do every whit as bad.—Let not therefore the godly attribute it to themselves, or merely to their own goodness.

that they are not guilty of such horrid crimes as they hear of in others: let them consider it is not owing to them, but to God's restraints.—Thus all, both godly and ungodly, may learn from this doctrine, their great obligations to the restraining grace of God.

Section VII.

Why natural Men are not willing to come to Christ, and their dreadful condition.

Hence we may learn the reason why natural men will not come to Christ: they *do* not come because they *will* not come. *Ye* will *not come to me, that ye might have life*, John v. 40. When we say that natural men are not willing to come to Christ, it is not meant that they are not willing to be delivered from hell; for without doubt, no natural man is willing to go to hell. Nor is it meant, that they are not willing that Christ should keep them from going to hell. Without doubt natural men under awakenings often greatly desire this. But this does not argue that they are willing to come to Christ: for, notwithstanding their desire to be delivered from hell, their hearts do not close with Christ, but are averse to him. They see nothing in Christ wherefore they should desire him; no beauty nor comeliness to draw their hearts to him. And they are not willing to take Christ as he is: they would fain divide him. There are some things in him that they like, and others that they greatly dislike; but consider him as he is, and as he is offered to them in the gospel, and they are not willing to accept of Christ; for in doing so, they must of necessity part with all their sins; they must sell the world, and part with their own righteousness. But they had rather, for the present, run the venture of going to hell, than do that.

When men are *truly* willing to come to Christ, they are *freely* willing. It is not what they are forced and driven to by threatenings; but they are willing to come, and choose to come without being driven. But natural men have no such free willingness; but on the contrary have an aversion. And the ground of it is that which we have heard, *viz.* That they are enemies to God. Their having such a reigning enmity against God, makes them obstinately refuse to come to Christ. If a man is an enemy to God, he will necessarily be an enemy to Christ too; for Christ is the Son of God; he is infinitely near to God, yea has the nature of God, as well as the nature of man. He is a saviour appointed of God; he anointed him, and sent him into the world. And in performing the work of redemption, he wrought the works of God; always did those things that pleased him; and all that he does as a saviour, is to his glory. And one great thing he aimed at in redemption, was to deliver them from their idols, and bring them to God. The case being so, and sin-

ners being enemies to God, they will necessarily be opposite to coming to Christ; for Christ is of God, and as a saviour seeks them to bring them to God only; but natural men are not of God, but are averse to him.

Hence we see, how dreadful is the condition of natural men. Their state is a state of enmity with God. If we consider what God is, and what men are, it will be easy for us to conclude that such men as are God's enemies, must be miserable. Consider, ye that are enemies to God, how great he is. He is the eternal God who fills heaven and earth, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. He is the God that made you; in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways; the God in whom you live, and move, and have your being; who has your soul and body in his hands every moment.

You would look on yourself as in very unhappy circumstances, if your neighbours were all your enemies, and none of your fellow-creatures were your friends. If every body were set against you, and all despised and hated you, you would be ready to think, you had better be out of the world than in it. But if it be such a calamity to have enmity maintained between you and your fellow-creatures, what is it, when you and the almighty God are enemies? What avails either the friendship or enmity of your neighbours, poor worms of the dust, in comparison of the friendship or enmity of the great God of heaven and earth? Consider,

1. If you continue in your enmity a little longer, there will be a mutual enmity between God and you to all eternity. God will appear to be your dreadful and irreconcilable enemy. If you should die an enemy to God, there will be no such thing as any reconciliation after death. God will then appear to you in hatred, without any love, any pity, and any mercy at all. As you hate God, he will hate you. And that will be verified of you,—*My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me*, Zech. xi. 8. And then God will be your enemy for ever. If you be not reconciled so as to become his friend in this life, God never will become your friend after death. If you continue an enemy to God till death, God will continue an enemy to you to all eternity. You will have no mediator offered you: there will be no day's man betwixt you. So that it becomes you to consider what it will be to have God your enemy to all eternity, without any possibility of being reconciled.

Consider, what will it be to have this enmity to be mutual, and maintained for ever on both sides. For as God will for ever continue an enemy to you, so you will for ever continue an enemy to God. If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without control. When you come to be a firebrand of hell, you will be so in two respects.

viz. As you will be full of the fire of God's wrath; and as you will be all on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice, as you will with the fire of divine vengeance, and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear as you are, a viper indeed. You are now under great disguise; a wolf in sheep's clothing: but then your mask will be pulled off; you shall loose your garments, and walk naked, Rev. xvi. 15. Then will you vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies. That same tongue, to cool which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ. And that not from any new corruption being put into your heart; but only from God's withdrawing his hand from restraining your old corruption. And what a miserable way will this be of spending your eternity.

2. Consider, what will be the consequence of a mutual enmity between God and you, if it be continued. Though hitherto you have met with no very great changes, yet they will come. After a little while, dying time will come; and then what will be the consequence of this enmity? God, whose enemy you are, has the frame of your body in his hands. Your times are in his hand; and he it is that appoints your bounds. And when he sends death to arrest you, to change your countenance, to dissolve your frame, and to take you away from all your earthly friends, and from all that is dear and pleasant to you in the world; what will be the issue? Will not you then stand in need of God's help? Would not he be the best friend in such a case, worth more than ten thousand earthly friends? If God be your enemy then, to whom will you betake yourself for a friend? When you launch forth into the boundless gulf of eternity, then you will need some friend to take care of you; but if God be your enemy, where will you betake yourself? Your soul must go naked into another world in eternal separation from all worldly things: and your soul will not be in its own power to defend, or dispose of itself. Will you not then need to have God for a friend, into whose hands you may commend your spirit? But how dreadful will it be, to have God your enemy!

The time is coming when the frame of this world shall be dissolved. Christ shall descend in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father; and you, with all the rest of mankind, must stand before his judgment-seat. Then what will be the consequence of this mutual enmity between God and you! If God be your enemy, who will stand your friend? Now, it may be, it does not appear to be very terrible to you to have God for your enemy; but when such changes as these are brought to pass, it will greatly alter the appearance of things. Then God's favour will appear to you of infinite worth. They, and they only, will then appear happy, who have the love of God: and then you will know that God's enemies are miserable.—But under this head consider more particularly several things.

(1.) What God can do to his enemies. Or rather, what can he not do? How miserable can he who is almighty make his enemies? Consider, you that are enemies to God, whether or no you shall be able to make your part good with him. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?* 1 Cor. x.22. Have you such a conceit of your own strength, as that you think to try it out with God? Do you intend to run the risk of an encounter with him? Do you imagine that your hands can be strong, or your heart can endure? Do you think you shall be well able to defend yourself, or to escape out of his hand? Do you think that you shall be able to uphold your spirits, when God acts as an enemy towards you? If so, then gird up your loins, and see what the event will be. Therefore thus will I do unto thee—*and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God.*—Amos iv. 12. Is it not in vain to set the briers and thorns in battle array against devouring flames; which though they seem to be armed with natural weapons, yet the fire will pass through them, and burn them together? See Isa. xxvii. 4.

And if you endeavour to support yourself under God's wrath, cannot God lay you under such misery, as to cause your spirit quite to fail; so that you shall find no strength to resist him, or to uphold yourself? Why should a worm think of supporting himself against an omnipotent adversary? Consider, God has made your soul: and he can fill it with misery; he made your body, and can bring what torments he will upon it. God who made you, has given you a capacity to bear torment; and he has that capacity in his hands. How dreadful must it be to fall into the hands of such an enemy! Surely, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. x. 31.

(2.) If God be your enemy, you may rationally conclude that he will act as such in his dealings with you. We have already observed that you have enmity without any love or true respect. So if you continue to be so, God will appear to be your mere enemy; and will be so for ever, without being reconciled. But if it be so, he will doubtless act as such. If he eternally hates you, he will act in his dealings with you, as one that hates you without any love or pity. The proper tendency and aim of hatred, is the misery of the object hated; so that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared.—Now, God does not act as your mere enemy: if he corrects you, it is in measure. He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now: but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls, invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end to all these things: in another world God will cease to show you mercy.

(3.) If you will continue God's enemy, you may rationally conclude that God will deal with you so as to make it appear

how dreadful it is to have God for an enemy. It is very dreadful to have a mighty prince for an enemy. *The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xix. 12. But if the wrath of a man, a fellow-worm, be so terrible, what is the wrath of God! And God will doubtless show it to be immensely more dreadful. If you will be an enemy, God will act so as to glorify those attributes which he exercises as an enemy; which are, his majesty, his power, and justice. His great majesty, his awful justice, and mighty power, shall be showed upon you. *What if God, willing to show wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.* Rom. ix. 22.

(4.) Consider, What God has said he will do to his enemies. He has declared that they shall not escape; but that he will surely punish them. *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out all those that hate thee.* Psalm xxi. 8. *And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.* Deut. vii.10. *The Lord shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.* Psalm lxviii. 21.

Yea, God hath sworn that he will be avenged on them; and that in a most awful and dreadful manner. *For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh,) and that with the blood of the slain—from the beginning of revenges on the enemy.* Deut. xxxii. 40, 41,42. The terribleness of the threatened destruction is here variously set forth. God "whets his glittering sword," as one that prepares himself to do some great execution. "His hands take hold on judgment," to signify that he will surely reward them as they deserve. "He will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him." *i. e.* He will render their full reward. "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." This signifies the greatness of the destruction. It shall not be a little of their blood that shall satisfy; but his arrows shall be glutted with their blood. "And his sword shall devour flesh." That is, it shall make dreadful waste of it. This is the terrible manner in which God will one day rise up and execute vengeance on his enemies!

Again, the completeness of their destruction is represented in the following words: *The wicked shall perish, the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume: into smoke shall they consume away.* Psalm xxxvii. 20. The fat of lambs, when it is burnt in the fire, burns all up; there is not so much as a cinder left; it all consumes into smoke. This represents

the perfect destruction of God's enemies in his wrath. So God hath promised Christ; that he would make his enemies his footstool, Psalm cx. 1. *i. e.* He would pour the greatest contempt upon them, and as it were tread them under foot. Consider, that all these things will be executed on you, if you continue God's enemies.

Section VIII.

God may justly withhold Mercy.

If natural men are God's enemies, hence we may learn, how justly God may refuse to show you mercy. For is God obliged to show mercy to his enemies? Is God bound to set his love on them that have no love to him; but hate him with perfect hatred? Is he bound to come and dwell with them that have an aversion to him, and choose to keep at a distance from him, and fly from him as one that is hateful to them? Even should you desire the salvation of your soul, is God bound to comply with your desires, when you always resist and oppose his will? Is God bound to put honour upon you, and to advance you to such dignity as to be a child of the King of kings, and the heir of glory, while at the same time you set him too low to have even the lowest place in your heart?

This doctrine affords a strong argument for the absolute sovereignty of God, with respect to the salvation of sinners. If God is pleased to show mercy to his haters, it is certainly fit that he should do it in a sovereign way, without acting as any way obliged. God will show mercy to his mortal enemies; but then he will not be bound, he will have his liberty to choose the objects of his mercy; to show mercy to what enemy he pleases, and to punish and destroy which of his haters he pleases. And certainly this is a fit and reasonable thing. It is fit that God should distribute saving blessings in this way, and in no other, *viz.* in a sovereign and arbitrary way. And that ever any body thought of or devised any other way for God to show mercy, than to have mercy on whom he would have mercy, must arise from ignorance of their own hearts, whereby they were insensible what enemies they naturally are to God. But consider here the following things:

1. How *causelessly* you are enemies to God. You have no manner of reason for it, either from what God is, or from what he has done. You have no reason for this *from what he is*. For he is an infinitely lovely and glorious Being; the fountain of all excellency, all that is amiable and lovely in the universe, is originally and eminently in him. Nothing can possibly be con-

ceived of that could be lovely in God, that is not in him, and that in the greatest possible degree.

And you have no reason for this from *what God has done*. For he has been a good and bountiful God to you. He has exercised abundance of kindness to you; has carried you from the womb, preserved your life, taken care of you, and provided for you, all your life long. He has exercised great patience and long suffering towards you. If it had not been for the kindness of God to you, what would have become of you? What would have become of your body? And what, before this time, would have become of your soul? And you are now, every day, and hour, maintained by the goodness and bounty of God. Every new breath you draw, is a new gift of his to you. How causelessly then are you such dreadful enemies to God! And how justly might he for it eternally deprive you of all mercy, seeing you do thus requite God for his mercy and kindness to you!

2. Consider, how *you would resent* it, if others were such enemies to you, as you are to God. If they had their hearts so full of enmity to you; if they treated you with such contempt, and opposed you, as you do God; how would you resent it? Do you not find that you are apt greatly to resent it, when any oppose you, and show an ill spirit towards you? And though you excuse your own enmity against God from your corrupt nature that you brought into the world with you, which you could not help; yet you do not excuse others for being enemies to you from their corrupt nature that they brought into the world, which they could not help; but are ready bitterly to resent it notwithstanding.

Consider therefore, if you, a poor unworthy, unlovely creature, do so resent it, when you are hated, how may God justly resent it when you are enemies to him, an infinitely glorious Being; and a Being from whom you have received so much kindness!

3. How *unreasonable* is it for you to imagine that you can oblige God to have respect to you by any thing that you can do, continuing still to be his enemy. If you think you have prayed and read, and done something considerable for God; yet who cares for the seeming kindness of an enemy? What value would you yourself set upon a man making a show of friendship, when you knew at the same time, that he was inwardly your mortal enemy? Would you look upon yourself obliged for such respect and kindness? Would you not rather abhor it? Would you count such respect to be valued, as Joab's towards Amasa, who took him by the beard, and kissed him, and said, Art thou in health, my brother?—and smote him at the same time under the fifth rib, and killed him! What if you do pray to God? Is he obliged to hear the prayers of an enemy? What if you have taken a great deal of pains, is God obliged to give heaven for the

prayers of an enemy: He may justly abhor your prayers, and all that you do in religion, as the flattery of a mortal enemy.

Section IX.

Practical Improvement.

Hence we may learn,

1. How wonderful is the love that is manifested in giving Christ to die for us. For this is love to enemies. "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." How wonderful was the love of God the Father, in giving such a gift to those who not only could not be profitable to him, but were his enemies, and to so great a degree! They had great enmity against him; yet so did he love them, that he gave his own Son to lay down his life, in order to save their lives. Though they had enmity that sought to pull God down from his throne; yet he so loved them, that he sent down Christ from heaven, from his throne there, to be in form of a servant; and instead of a throne of glory, gave him to be nailed to the cross, and to be laid in the grave, that so we might be brought to a throne of glory.

How wonderful was the love of Christ, in thus exercising dying love towards his enemies! He loved those that hated him, with hatred that sought to take away his life, so as voluntarily to lay down his life, that they might have life through him. *Herein is love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and laid down his life for us.*

1. If we are all naturally God's enemies, hence we may learn what a spirit it becomes us as Christians to possess towards our enemies. Though we are enemies to God, yet we hope that God has loved us, that Christ has died for us, that God has forgiven or will forgive us; and will do us good, and bestow infinite mercies and blessings upon us, so as to make us happy for ever. All this mercy, we hope has been, or will be exercised towards us.

Certainly then, it will not become us to be bitter in our spirits against those that are enemies to us, and have injured and ill treated us; and though they have yet an ill spirit towards us. Seeing we depend so much on God's forgiving us, though enemies, we should exercise a spirit of forgiveness towards our enemies. And therefore our Saviour inserted it in that prayer, which he dictated as a general directory to all; "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," to enforce the duty upon us, and to show us how reasonable it is. And we ought to love them even while enemies; for so we hope God hath done to us. We should be the children of our Father, who is kind to the unthankful and evil. Luke vi. 35.

If we refuse thus to do, and are of another spirit, we may justly expect that God will deny us his mercy, as he has threatened! *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.* Matt. vi. 14, 15. The same we have in the parable of the man who owed his lord ten thousand talents. Matt. xviii. 23—35.

SERMON III.

WISDOM DISPLAYED IN SALVATION.

EPHESIANS iii. 10.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

Introduction.

THE apostle is speaking in the context of the glorious doctrine of the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ, and how it was in a great measure kept hid in the past ages of the world. It was a mystery, that before they did not understand, but now it was in a glorious manner brought to light, (ver. 3—5.) "By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit:" And ver. 8, 9. "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

And the apostle in the text informs us, that what Christ had accomplished towards his church, in the work of redemption, had not only in a great measure unveiled the mystery to the church in this world; but God had more clearly and fully opened it to the understanding even of the angels themselves; and that this was one end of God in it, to discover the glory of his wisdom to the angels. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

One end of revealing God's counsels concerning the work of redemption, is making known God's *wisdom*. It is called *manifold* wisdom; because of the manifold glorious ends that are at-

tained by it. The excellent designs, hereby accomplished, are very manifold. The wisdom of God in this is of vast extent. The contrivance is so manifold, that one may spend an eternity in discovering more of the excellent ends and designs accomplished by it; and the multitude and vast variety of things that are, by divine contrivance, brought to conspire to the bringing about those ends.

We may observe, *to whom* it is that God would manifest this his wisdom, by revealing the mystery of our redemption;—and they are not only men, but the *angels*. "To the intent that now unto the *principalities* and *powers in heavenly places* might be known—the manifold wisdom of God." The angels are often called principalities and powers, because of the exalted dignity of their nature. The angels excel in strength and wisdom. Those who are the *wise men* of the earth are called *princes* in the style of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 6. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world.* Ver. 8. *Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* So the angels are called principalities for their great wisdom. They may also be so called for the honour God has put upon them, in employing them as his ministers and instruments, wherewith he governs the world: and therefore are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, Col. i. 16.

They are called principalities and powers in *heavenly* places, as distinguishing them from those that are in places of *earthly* power and dignity. The offices, or places of dignity and power that the angels sustain, are not earthly but *heavenly*. They are in places of honour and power in the *heavenly city* and the *heavenly kingdom*.

One end of God in revealing his design of contrivance for redemption, as he hath so fully and gloriously done by Jesus Christ, is that the angels in heaven may behold the glory of his wisdom by it. Though they are such bright intelligences, and do always behold the face of God the Father; and know so much; yet here is matter of instruction for them. Here they may see more of the divine wisdom than ever they had seen before. It was a new discovery of the wisdom of God to them.

The *time* when this display of the wisdom of God was especially made to the angels is, when Christ introduced the gospel dispensation implied in these words, "To the intent that *now* unto the principalities," &c. When Christ came into the world and died, and actually performed the work of redemption—when he had fully and plainly revealed the counsels of God concerning it; and accordingly introduced the evangelical dispensation, and erected the gospel church,—then the angels understood more of the mystery of man's redemption, and the mani

fold designs and counsels of divine wisdom, than ever they had done before.

In the foregoing verse the apostle, after speaking of revealing this wisdom of God to man, "And to make all *men* see, what is the fellowship of this mystery," &c. speaks of this mystery as a thing from the beginning kept hid till now. "The mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God—— that now," &c. In this verse he mentions another end, *viz.* that he may at the same time make the *angels* also see God's wisdom in his glorious scheme of redemption.——"Now, at this time," implies that it was before a mystery kept hid from them in comparison of what it is now. And here is room enough for the angels to discover more and more to all eternity of the wisdom of God in this work.

Observe the *medium* by which the angels come by this knowledge, *viz.* the church.—"That now unto principalities—might be known *by the church*,"—*i. e.* by the things they see done *in* the church, or *towards* the church: and by what they see *concerning* the church. So hath it pleased the sovereign God that the angels should have the most glorious discoveries of divine wisdom by his doings towards his church, a sort of beings much inferior to themselves. It hath pleased God to put this honour upon us.

The wisdom appearing in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, is far above the wisdom of the angels. For here it is mentioned as one end of God in revealing the contrivance of our salvation, that the angels thereby might see and know how great and manifold the wisdom of God is, to hold forth the divine wisdom to the angels' view and admiration. But why is it so, if this wisdom be not higher than their own wisdom? It never would have been mentioned as one end of revealing the contrivance of redemption, that the angels might see how manifold God's wisdom is, if all the wisdom to be seen in it was no greater than their own. It is mentioned as a wisdom such as they had never seen before, not in God, much less in themselves. That *now* might be known how manifold the wisdom of God is; now, four thousand years since the creation. In all that time the angels had always beheld the face of God; and had been studying God's works of creation; yet they never till that day, had seen any thing like that: never knew how *manifold* God's wisdom is, as now they knew it by the church.

Section 1.

Wonderful things done, by which Salvation is procured.

Such is the choice of the person chosen to be our Redeemer, —the substituting of him in our room; his incarnation—his life —his death—and exaltation. And,

1. We will consider the *choice of the person* to be our Redeemer. When God designed the redemption of mankind, his great wisdom appears in that he pitched upon his own, his only begotten Son, to be the person to perform the work. He was a Redeemer of God's own choosing, and therefore he is called in Scripture God's *elect*, (Isa. lxii. 1.) The wisdom of choosing this person to be the Redeemer, appears in his being every way a *fit* person for the undertaking. It was necessary that the person that is the Redeemer, should be a *divine* person ;—None but a *divine* person was sufficient for this great work. The work is infinitely unequal to any creature. It was requisite, that the Redeemer of sinners, should be himself infinitely *holy*. None could take away the infinite evil of sin, but one that was infinitely far from and contrary to sin himself. Christ is a fit person on this account.

It was requisite, that the person, in order to be sufficient for this undertaking, should be one of infinite *dignity* and worthiness, that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessings. The Son of God is a fit person on this account. It was necessary, that he should be a person of infinite *power* and *wisdom* ; for this work is so difficult, that it requires such an one. Christ is a fit person also upon this account. It was requisite, that he should be a person infinitely *dear* to God the Father, in order to give an infinite value to his transactions in the Father's esteem, and that the Father's love to him might balance the offence and provocation by our sins. Christ is a fit person upon this account. Therefore called *the beloved*, (Eph. i. 6.) He hath made us accepted in the *beloved*.

It was requisite, that the person should be one that could act in this as of *his own absolute right :* one that, in himself, is not a servant or subject; because, if he is one that cannot act of his own right, he cannot merit any thing. He that is a servant, and that can do no more than he is bound to do, cannot merit. And then he that has nothing that is absolutely his own, cannot pay any price to redeem another. Upon this account Christ is a fit person ; and none but a divine person can be fit.—And he must be a person also of infinite *mercy* and *love ;* for no other person but such an one would undertake a work so difficult, for a creature so unworthy as man. Upon this account also Christ is a fit person.—It was requisite that he should be a person of unchangeable perfect *truth* and faithfulness ; otherwise he could not be fit to be depended on by us in so great an affair. Christ is also a fit person upon this account.

The wisdom of God in choosing his eternal Son, appears, not only in that he is a fit person ; but in that he was the only fit person of all persons, whether created or uncreated. No *created* person, neither man, nor angel, was fit for this undertaking; for we have just now shown, that he must be a person of *infinite*

holiness—dignity—power—wisdom; infinitely dear to God—of infinite love and mercy; and one that may act of his own absolute right. But no creature, how excellent soever, has any one of these qualifications.—There are three *uncreated* persons, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and Christ alone of these was a suitable person for a Redeemer. It was not meet, that the Redeemer should be God the *Father;* because he, in the divine economy of the persons of the Trinity, was the person that holds the rights of the Godhead, and so was the person offended, whose justice required satisfaction, and was to be appeased by a mediator. It was not meet it should be the *Holy Ghost*, for in being mediator between the Father and the saints, he is in some sense so between the Father and the Spirit. The saints, in all their spiritual transactions with God, act by the Spirit: or rather, it is the spirit of God, that acts in them. They are the temples of the *Holy Ghost.* The holy Spirit dwelling in them, is their principle of action, in all their transactions with God. But in these their spiritual transactions with God, they act by a *mediator.* These spiritual and holy exercises cannot be acceptable, or avail any thing with God, as from a fallen creature, but by a mediator. Therefore Christ in being mediator between the Father and the saints, may be said to be mediator between the Father and the holy Spirit, that acts in the saints. And therefore it was meet, that the mediator should not be either the Father or the Spirit, but a middle person between them both. It is the Spirit in the saints, that seeks the blessing of God, by faith and prayer; and, as the apostle says, with groanings that cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 26. *Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.* The Spirit in the saints seeks divine blessings of God, by and through a mediator; and therefore that mediator must not be the Spirit, but another person.

It shows a divine wisdom, to *know* that he was a fit person. No other but one of *divine* wisdom could have known it. None but one of infinite wisdom could have thought of him to be a Redeemer of sinners. For he, as he is God, is one of the persons offended by sin, against whom man by his sin had rebelled. Who but God, infinitely wise, could ever have thought of *him* to be a Redeemer of sinners. Against whom they had sinned, to whom they were enemies, and of whom they deserved infinitely ill! Who would ever have thought of him as one that should set his heart upon man, and exercise infinite love and pity to him, and exhibit infinite wisdom, power, and merit in redeeming him! We proceed,

2. To consider the *substituting* of this person in our room. After choosing the person to be our Redeemer, the next step of divine wisdom is, to contrive the way how he should perform

this work. If God had declared who the person was that should do this work, and had gone no further; no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them, that his own Son must be the Redeemer; and that he alone was a fit person for the work: and that he was a person every way fit and sufficient for it,—but had proposed to *them* to contrive a way how this fit and sufficient person should proceed, we may well suppose that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss.

The first thing necessary to be done, is, that the Son of God should become our representative and surety; and so be substituted in the sinner's room. But who of created intelligences would have thought of any such thing as the eternal and infinitely beloved Son of God being substituted in the room of sinners! His standing in stead of a sinner, a rebel, an object of the wrath of God! Who would have thought of a person of infinite glory representing sinful worms, that had made themselves by sin infinitely provoking and abominable!

For if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's room, then his sin must be charged upon him: he will thereby take the guilt of the sinner upon himself; he must be subject to the same law that man was, both as to the commands, and threatenings: but who would have thought of any such thing concerning the Son of God! But we proceed,

3. To consider the *incarnation* of Jesus Christ. The next step of divine wisdom in contriving how Christ should perform the work of redeeming sinners, was in determining his incarnation. Suppose God had revealed his counsels thus far to created understandings, that his own Son was the person chosen for this work, that he had substituted him in the sinner's room, and appointed him to take the sinner's obligations and guilt on himself—and had revealed no more, but had left the rest to them to find out; it is no way probable, that even then they could ever have thought of a way, whereby this person might actually have performed the work of redemption. For if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he takes the sinner's obligations on himself. For instance, he must take the obligation the sinner is under to perform *perfect obedience* to the divine law. But it is not probable, that any creature could have conceived how that could be possible.—How should a person who is the eternal JEHOVAH, become a servant, be under law, and perform obedience even to the law of man!

And again, if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he comes under the sinner's obligation to suffer the punishment, which man's sin had deserved. And who could have thought that to be possible! For how should a divine person, who is essentially, unchangeably, and infinitely happy, suffer pain and torment? And how should he who is the object of

God's infinitely dear love, suffer the wrath of his Father. It is not to be supposed, that created wisdom ever would have found out a way how to have got over these difficulties, but divine wisdom has found out a way, *viz.* by the incarnation of the Son of God. That the Word should be made flesh, that he might be both God and man, in one person: what created understanding could have conceived that such a thing was possible. Yet those things could never be proved to be impossible. This distinction duly considered, will show the futility of many Socinian objections.

And if God had revealed to them, that it was possible, and even that it should be but left them to find out how it should be: we may well suppose that they would all have been puzzled and confounded, to conceive of a way for so uniting a man to the eternal Son of God, that they should be but one person; that one who is truly a man in all respects, should indeed be the very same Son of God, that was with God from all eternity. This is a great mystery to us. Hereby a person that is infinite, omnipotent and unchangeable, is become in a sense, a finite, a feeble man: a man subject to our sinless infirmities, passions, and calamities! The great God, the soverign of heaven and earth, is thus become a worm of the dust. (Psal. xxii. 6.) "I am a worm, and no man." He that is eternal and self-existent, is by this union born of a woman! He who is the great original Spirit, is clothed with flesh and blood like one of us! He who is independent, self-sufficient, and all-sufficient, now is come to stand in need of food and clothing: he becomes poor, "has not where to lay his head,"—stands in need of the charity of men, and is maintained by it. It is far above us, to conceive how it is done. It is a great wonder and mystery to us: but it was no mystery to divine wisdom.

4. The next thing to be considered is, the *life of Christ* in this world. The wisdom of God appears in the circumstances of his life—and in the work and business of his life.

(1.) The *circumstances* of his life. If God had revealed that his own Son should be incarnate, and should live in this world in the human nature; and it had been left to men to determine what circumstances of life would have been most suitable for him, human wisdom would have determined, that he should appear in the world in a most magnificient manner; with very extraordinary outward ensigns of honour, authority, and power, far above any of the kings of the earth: that here he should reign in great visible pomp and splendour over all nations.—And thus it was that men's wisdom did determine, before Christ came. The wise, the great men among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, who were called "Princes of this world," *did* expect that the Messiah would thus appear. But the wisdom of God

chose quite otherwise: it chose that when the Son of God became man, he should begin his life in a stable, for many years dwell obscurely in a family of low degree in the world, and be in low outward circumstances; that he should be poor, and not have where to lay his head; that he should be maintained by the charity of some of his disciples; that he should "Grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground;" (Isa. liii. 2.) "That he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," (Isa. xlii. 2.) That he should come to Zion in a lowly manner, "Riding on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass.—"That he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

And now the divine determination in this matter is made known, we may safely conclude that it is far the most suitable; and that it would not have been at all suitable for God, when he was manifest in the flesh, to appear with earthly pomp, wealth and grandeur. No! these things are infinitely too mean, and despicable, for the Son of God to show as if he affected or esteemed them. Men, if they had had this way proposed to them, would have been ready to condemn it as foolish, and very unsuitable for the Son of God. "But the foolishness of God is wiser than men," (1 Cor. i. 25.) "And God hath brought to nought the wisdom of this world, and the princes of this world." (1 Cor. ii. 6.) Christ, by thus appearing in mean and low outward circumstances in the world, has poured contempt upon all worldly wealth and glory, and has taught us to despise it. And if it becomes mean men to despise them, how much more did it become the Son of God! And then Christ hereby hath taught us to be lowly in heart. If he who was infinitely high and great, was thus lowly; how lowly should we be, who are indeed so vile.

(2.) The wisdom of God appears in the work and business of the life of Christ: Particularly, that he should perfectly obey the law of God, under such great temptations: that he should have conflicts with, and overcome for us, in a way of obedience, the powers of earth and hell: that he should be subject to, not only the moral law, but the *ceremonial* also, that heavy yoke of bondage. Christ went through the time of his public ministry, in delivering to us divine instructions and doctrines. The wisdom of God appears in giving us such an one to be our prophet and teacher; who is a divine person, who is himself the very wisdom and word of God, and was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father. His word is of greater authority and weight than if delivered by the mouth of an ordinary prophet. And how wisely ordered, that the same should be our teacher and Redeemer; in order that his relations and offices, as Redeemer, might the more sweeten and endear his instructions to us. We are ready to give heed to what is said by those who are dear to

us. Our love to their persons makes us to delight in their discourse. It is therefore wisely ordered, that he who has done so much to endear himself to us, should be appointed our great prophet, to deliver to us divine doctrines.

5. The next thing to be considered is the death of Christ. This is a means of salvation for poor sinners, that no other but divine wisdom would have pitched upon: and when revealed, it was doubtless greatly to the surprise of all the hosts of heaven, and they never will cease to wonder at it. How astonishing is it, that a person who is blessed for ever, and is infinitely and essentially happy, should endure the greatest sufferings that ever were endured on earth! That a person who is the supreme Lord and Judge of the world, should be arraigned, and should stand at the judgment-seat of mortal worms, and then be condemned. That a person who is the living God, and the fountain of life, should be put to death. That a person who created the world, and gives life to all his creatures, should be put to death by his own creatures. That a person of infinite majesty and glory, and so the object of the love, praises and adorations of angels, should be mocked and spit upon by the vilest of men. That a person infinitely good, and who is love itself, should suffer the greatest cruelty. That a person who is infinitely beloved of the Father, should be put to inexpressible anguish under his own Father's wrath. That he who is King of heaven, who hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, should be buried in the prison of the grave. How wonderful is this! And yet this is the way that God's wisdom hath fixed upon, as the way of sinners' salvation; as neither unsuitable, nor dishonourable to Christ.

6. The last thing done to procure salvation for sinners, is Christ's *exaltation*. Divine wisdom saw it needful, or most expedient, that the same person who died upon the cross, should sit at his right hand, on his own throne, as supreme governor of the world, and should have particularly the absolute disposal of all things relating to man's salvation, and should be the judge of the world. This was needful, because it was requisite that the same person who purchased salvation, should have the bestowing of it; for it is not fit, that God should at all transact with the fallen creature in a way of mercy, but by a Mediator. And this is exceedingly for the strengthening of the faith and comfort of the saints, that he who hath endured so much to purchase salvation for them, has all things in heaven and in earth delivered unto him; that he might bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. And that the same person that loved them so greatly as to shed his precious blood for them, was to be their final judge.

This then was another thing full of wonders, that he who was man as well as God; he who was a servant, and died like a

malefactor; should be made the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, angels and men; the absolute disposer of eternal life and death; the supreme judge of all created intelligent beings, for eternity; and should have committed to him all the governing power of God the Father; and that, not only as God, but as God-man, not exclusive of the human nature.

As it is wonderful, that a person who is truly *divine*, should be humbled, so as to become a servant, and to suffer as a malefactor; so it is in like manner wonderful, that he who is God-man, not exclusive of the manhood, should be exalted to the power and honour of the great God of heaven and earth. But such wonders as these has infinite Wisdom contrived and acccomplished in order to our salvation.

Section II.

In this Way of salvation God is greatly glorified.

God has greatly glorified himself in the work of creation and providence. All his works praise him, and his glory shines brightly from them all; but as some stars differ from others in glory, so the glory of God shines brighter in some of his works than in others. And amongst all these, the work of redemption is like the sun in his strength. The glory of the author is abundantly the most resplendent in this work.

I. Each *attribute* of God is glorified in the work of redemption. How God has exceedingly glorified his wisdom, may more fully appear before we have done with this subject. But more particularly,

1. God hath exceedingly glorified his power in this work. —It shows the great and inconceivable power of God to unite natures so infinitely different, as the divine and human nature, in one person. If God can make one who is truly God, and one that is truly man, the self-same person, what is it that he cannot do? This is a greater and more marvellous work than creation.

The power of God most gloriously appears in man's being actually saved and redeemed in this way. In his being brought out of a state of sin and misery into a conformity to God; and at last to the full and perfect enjoyment of God. This is a more glorious demonstration of divine power, than creating things out of nothing, upon two accounts. One is, the *effect is greater and more excellent.* To produce the new creature is a more glorious effect, than merely to produce a creature.—Making a holy creature, a creature in the spiritual image of God, in the image of the divine excellencies, and a partaker of the divine nature—is a greater effect than merely to give being. And therefore as the effect is greater, it is a more glorious manifestation of power.

And then, in this effect of the actual redemption of sinners, *the term from which, is more distant from the term to which*, than in the work of creation. The term from which, in the work of creation, is *nothing*, and the term to which, is *being*. But the term from which, in the work of redemption, is a state *infinitely worse than nothing;* and the term to which, *a holy and a happy being*, a state infinitely better than mere being. The terms in the production of the last, are much more remote from one another, than in the first.

And then the production of this last effect, is a more glorious manifestation of power, than the work of creation; because, though in creation, the terms are very distant—as *nothing* is very remote from *being*—yet there is no opposition. Nothing makes any opposition to the creating power of God. But in redemption, the divine power meets with, and overcomes great opposition. There is great opposition in a state of sin to a state of grace. Men's lusts and corruptions are exceedingly opposite to grace and holiness; and greatly resist the production of the effect. But this opposition is completely overcome in actual redemption.

Besides, there is great opposition from Satan. The power of God is very glorious in this work, because it therein conquers the strongest and most powerful enemies. Power never appears more illustrious than in conquering. Jesus Christ, in this work, conquers and triumphs over thousands of devils, strong and mighty spirits, uniting all their strength against him. Luke xi. 21. *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.* Col. ii. 15. *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.*

2. The *justice* of God is exceedingly glorified in this work. God is so strictly and immutably just, that he would not spare his beloved Son when he took upon him the guilt of men's sins, and was substituted in the room of sinners. He would not abate him the least mite of that debt which justice demanded. Justice should take place, though it cost his infinitely dear Son his precious blood; and his enduring such extraordinary reproach, and pain, and death in its most dreadful form.

3. The *holiness* of God is also exceedingly glorious in this work. Never did God so manifest his hatred of sin as in the death and sufferings of his only begotten Son. Hereby he showed himself unappeaseable to sin, and that it was impossible for him to be at peace with it.

4. God hath also exceedingly glorified his *truth* in this way, both in his threatenings and promises. Herein is fulfilled the threatenings of the law wherein God said, *In the day thou*

eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. God showed hereby, that not only heaven and earth should pass away, but, which is more, that the blood of him who is the eternal Jehovah should be spilt, rather than one jot or tittle of his word should fail, till all be fulfilled.

5. And lastly, God has exceedingly glorified his *mercy* and love in this work. The mercy of God was an attribute never seen before in its exercises, till it was seen in this work of redemption, or the fruits of it. The goodness of God appeared towards the angels in giving them being and blessedness. It appeared glorious towards man in his primitive state, a state of holiness and happiness. But now God hath shown that he can find in his heart to love sinners, who deserve his infinite hatred. And not only hath he shown that he can love them, but love them so as to give them more and do greater things for them than ever he did for the holy angels, that never sinned nor offended their Creator. He loved sinful men so as to give them a greater gift than ever he gave the angels; so as to give his own Son, and not only to give him to be their possession and enjoyment; but to give him to be their sacrifice. And herein he has done more for them, than if he had given them all the visible world; yea, more than if he had given them all the angels, and all heaven besides. God hath loved them so, that hereby he purchased for them deliverance from eternal misery, and the possession of immortal glory.

II. Each *person* of the Trinity is exceedingly glorified in this work. Herein the work of redemption is distinguished from all the other works of God. The attributes of God are glorious in his other works; but the three persons of the Trinity are distinctly glorified in no work as in this of redemption. In this work every distinct person has his distinct parts and offices assigned him. Each one has his particular and distinct concern in it, agreeable to their distinct, personal properties, relations and economical offices. The redeemed have an equal concern with, and dependence upon each person, in this affair, and owe equal honour and praise to each of them.

The Father appoints and provides the Redeemer, and accepts the price of redemption. The Son is the Redeemer and the price. He redeems by offering up himself. The Holy Ghost immediately communicates to us the thing purchased; yea, and he is the good purchased. The sum of what Christ purchased for us in holiness and happiness. But the Holy Ghost is the great principle both of all holiness and happiness. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all that Christ purchased for men. Gal. iii. 13, 14. *He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

The blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of Christ's fulness, which consists in partaking of that spirit, which is given not by measure unto him. This is the oil that was poured upon the head of the church, which ran down to the members of his body, to the skirts of his garment. Thus we have an equal concern with, and dependence upon each of the persons of the Trinity, distinctly; upon the Father as he provides the Redeemer, and the person of whom the purchase is made:—the Son as the purchaser, and the price;—the Holy Ghost as the good purchased.

Section III.

The Good attained by Salvation is wonderfully Various and exceeding Great.

Here we may distinctly consider—*the variety*—and the *greatness* of the good procured for men.

I. The good procured by salvation is wonderfully *various.* Here are all sorts of good procured for fallen man, that he *does* or *can* really need, or is *capable* of. The wisdom of God appears in the way of salvation, in that it is most worthy of an infinitely wise God, because every way perfect and sufficient. We, in our fallen state, are most necessitous creatures, full of wants; but they are here all answered. Every sort of good is here procured; whatever would really contribute to our happiness, and even many things we could not have thought of, had not Christ purchased them for us, and revealed them to us. Every demand of our circumstances, and craving of our natures, is here exactly answered.——For instance,

1. We stand in need of *peace* with God. We had provoked God to anger, his wrath abode upon us, and we needed to have it appeased. This is done for us in this way of salvation; for Christ, by shedding his blood, has fully satisfied justice, and appeased God's wrath, for all that shall believe in him. By the sentence of the law we were condemned to hell; and we needed to have our sins pardoned, that we might be delivered from hell. But in this work, pardon of sin and deliverance from hell, is fully purchased for us.

2. We needed not only to have God's wrath appeased, and our sin's pardoned; but we needed to have the *favour* of God. To have God, not only not our enemy, but our friend. Now God's favour is purchased for us by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

3. We needed not only to be delivered from hell, but to have some *satisfying happiness* bestowed. Man has a natural craving and thirst after happiness; and will thirst and crave, till his capacity is filled. And his capacity is of vast extent; and

nothing but an infinite good can fill, and satisfy his desires. But, notwithstanding provision is made in this way of salvation to answer those needs, there is a satisfying happiness purchased for us; that which is fully answerable to the capacity and cravings of our souls.

Here is food procured to answer all the appetites and faculties of our souls. God has made the soul of man of a spiritual nature; and therefore he needs a corresponding happiness; some spiritual object, in the enjoyment of which he may be happy. Christ has purchased the enjoyment of God, who is the great and original Spirit, as the portion of our souls. And he hath purchased the Spirit of God to come and dwell in us as an internal principle of happiness.

God hath made man a rational, intelligent creature; and man needs some good that shall be a suitable object of his understanding, for him to contemplate; wherein he may have full and sufficient exercise for his capacious faculties in their utmost extent. Here is an object, that is great and noble, and worthy of the exercise of the noblest faculties of the rational soul. God himself should be theirs, for them for ever to behold and contemplate; his glorious perfections and works are most worthy objects; and there is room enough for improving them, and still to exercise their faculties to all eternity.—What object can be more worthy to exercise the understanding of a rational soul, than the glories of the Divine Being, with which the heavenly intelligences, and even the infinite understanding of God himself is entertained!

Our souls need some good that shall be a suitable object of the will and affections; a suitable object for the choice, the acquiescence, the love, and the joy of the rational soul. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation. There is an infinitely excellent Being offered to be chosen, to be rested in, to be loved, to be rejoiced in, by us; even God himself, who is infinitely lovely, the fountain of all good; a fountain that can never be exhausted, where we can be in no danger of going to excess, in our love and joy; and here we may be assured ever to find our joy and delight in enjoyments answerable to our love and desires.

4. There is all possible enjoyment of this object, procured in this way of salvation. When persons entirely set their love upon another, they naturally desire to *see* that person; merely to hear of the person, does not satisfy love. So here is provision made that we should see God, the object of our supreme love. Not only that we should hear and read of him in his word, but that we should see him with a spiritual eye here: and not only so, but that we should have the satisfaction of seeing God face to face hereafter. This is promised, (Matt. v. 8.) *Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.* It is pro-

mised, that we shall not see God, as through a glass darkly, as we do now, but face to face. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. That we shall see Christ as he is. 1 John iii. 2.

We naturally desire not only to see those whom we love, but to *converse with* them. Provision is made for this also, that we should have spiritual conversation with God while in this world; and that we should be hereafter admitted to converse with Christ in the most intimate manner possible. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we should converse with God much more intimately, than otherwise it would have been possible for us; for now Christ is incarnate, is in our nature: he is become one of us, whereby we are under advantages for an immensely more free and intimate converse with him, than could have been, if he had remained only in the divine nature; and so in a nature infinitely distant from us.—We naturally desire not only to converse with those whom we greatly love, but to *dwell* with them. Provision, through Christ, is made for this. It is purchased and provided that we should dwell with God in his own house in heaven, which is called our father's house. To dwell for ever in God's presence, and at his right hand.

We naturally desire to have a *right* in that person whom we greatly love. Provision is made, in this way of salvation, that we should have a right *in* God; a right *to* him. This is the promise of the covenant of grace, "That he will be our God." God, with all his glorious perfections and attributes, with all his power and wisdom, and with all his majesty and glory, will be ours; so that we may call him our inheritance, and the portion of our souls: what we can humbly claim by faith, having this portion made over to us by a firm instrument; by a covenant ordered in all things and sure.—And we may also hereby claim a right to Jesus Christ. Love desires that the right should be *mutual.* The lover desires, not only to have a right to the beloved, but *that the beloved should also have a right to him:* he desires to be his beloved's, as well as his beloved should be his. Provision is also made for this, in this wise method of salvation, that God should have a special propriety in the redeemed, that they should be in a distinguishing manner *his:* that they should be his *peculiar* people. We are told that God sets apart the godly for himself, Ps. iv. 3. They are called God's jewels. The spouse speaks it with great satisfaction and rejoicing, Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Love desires to stand in some *near relation* to the beloved. Provision is made by Christ, that we should stand in the nearest possible relation to God; that he should be our father, and we should be his children. We are often instructed in the holy

scriptures, that God is the father of believers, and that they are his family.—And not only so, but they stand in the nearest relation to Christ Jesus. There is the closest union possible. The souls of believers are married to Christ. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Yea, there is yet a nearer relation than can be represented by such a similitude. Believers are as the very members of Christ, and of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. Yea, this is not near enough yet, but *they are one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Love naturally inclines to a *conformity* to the beloved. To have those excellencies, upon the account of which he is beloved, copied in himself. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we may be conformed to God; that we shall be transformed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.*—And that hereafter we shall see him as he is, and be like him.

It is the natural desire of love to *do something* for the beloved, either for his pleasure or honour. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation; that we should be made instruments of glorifying God, and promoting his kingdom here, and of glorifying him to all eternity.

5. In this way of salvation, provision is made for our having *every sort of good* that man naturally craves; as honour, wealth, and pleasure.—Here is provision made that we should be brought to the highest *honour*. This is what God has promised, *that those that honour him, he will honour*. And that true Christians shall be kings and priests unto God.—Christ has promised, *that as his Father has appointed unto him a kingdom, so he will appoint unto them, that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom*. He has promised to crown them with a crown of glory, and that *they shall sit with him in his throne. That he will confess their names before his Father, and before his angels. That he will give them a new name;* and that they *shall walk with him in white.*

Christ has also purchased for them the *greatest wealth*. All those that are in Christ, are rich. They are *now* rich. They have the *best* riches; being rich in faith, and the graces of the Spirit of God. They have gold tried in the fire. They have durable riches and righteousness. They have treasure in heaven, where neither thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They are possessors of all things.

Christ has, also, purchased *pleasure* for them; pleasures that are immensely preferable to all the pleasures of sense, most exquisitely sweet, and satisfying. He has purchased for them fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at God's right hand; and they shall drink of the river of God's pleasure.

6. Christ has purchased all needed good, *both for soul and body.* While we are here, we stand in need of these earthly things; and of these, Christ has purchased all that are best for us. He has purchased for the body, that God should feed and clothe us. Matt. vi. 26. *How much more shall he* FEED *you, O ye of little faith!* How much more shall he *clothe* you! Christ has purchased, that God should take care of us, and provide what is needed of these things, as a father provides for his children. 1 Pet. v. 7. *Casting your care upon him, for he careth for you.*

7. Christ has purchased good that is suitable for his people *in all conditions.* There is, in this way of salvation, respect had to, and provision made for all circumstances, that they can be in. Here is provision made for a time of affliction—for a time of poverty and pinching want—for a time of bereavement and mourning—for spiritual darkness—for a day of temptation—for a time of persecution—and for a time of death. Here is such a provision made, that is sufficient to carry a person above death, and all its terrors; and to give him a complete triumph over that king of terrors. Here is enough to sweeten the grave, and make it cease to seem terrible. Yea, enough to make death in prospect to seem desirable; and, in its near approach, to be not terrible, but joyful.

8. There is provision made in this way of salvation for the life and blessedness of soul and body *to all eternity.* Christ has purchased, that we should be delivered from a state of temporal death, as well as *spiritual* and *eternal.* The bodies of the saints shall be raised to life. He has purchased all manner of perfection for the body of which it is capable. It shall be raised a spiritual body in incorruption and glory, and be made like Christ's glorious body, to shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father, and to exist in a glorified state, in union with the soul, to all eternity.

9. But man, in his fallen state, still needs something else, in order to his happiness, than that these fore-mentioned blessings should be purchased for him, *viz.* He needs to be *qualified* for the possession and enjoyment of them. In order to our having a title to *these* blessings of the covenant of grace, (so that we can scripturally *claim* an interest in them,) there is a certain condition, which must be performed by us. We must *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *accept* of him as offered in the gospel for a Saviour. But, as we cannot do this of ourselves, Christ has purchased this, also, for all the elect. He has purchased, that they shall have faith given them; whereby they shall be [actively] united to Christ, and to have a [pleadable] title to his benefits.

But still, something further is necessary for man, in order to his coming to the actual possession of the inheritance. A man,

as soon as he has believed, has a title to the inheritance: but in order to come to the actual possession of it, he must *persevere* in a way of holiness. There is not only a gate that must be entered, but there is a narrow way that must be travelled, before we can arrive at heavenly blessedness; and that is a way of universal and persevering holiness. But men, after they have believed, cannot persevere in a way of holiness, of themselves. But there is sufficient provision made for this, also, in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. The matter of a saint's perseverance, is sufficiently secured by the purchase that Christ has made.

But still there is something else needful, in order to qualify a person for the actual entering upon the enjoyments and employments of a glorified estate, *viz.* that he should be made *perfectly holy:* that all remainders of sin should be taken away; for there cannot any sin enter into heaven. No soul must go into the glorious presence of God, with the least degree of the filth of sin. But there is provision made: for Christ has purchased that all sin shall be taken away out of the hearts of believers at death; and that they should be made perfectly holy: whereby they shall be fully and perfectly qualified to enter upon the pleasures and enjoyments of the new Jerusalem.

Christ has purchased all, both objective and inherent good: not only a portion to be enjoyed by us, but all those inherent qualifications necessary to our enjoyment of it. He has purchased not only justification, but sanctification and glorification; both holiness and happiness.—Having considered the good attained in the way of salvation, as *manifold* and various, I now proceed, as proposed,

II. To consider the good attained for us by this way of salvation, as *exceeding great.*

There is not only every sort of good we need, but of every sort in *that degree*, so as to answer the extent of our capacity, and the greatest stretch of our desires, and indeed of our conceptions. They are not only greater than our conceptions are here, but also greater than ever they could be, were it not that God's relation, and our own experience will teach us. They are greater than the tongue of angels can declare, the *deliverance* that we have in it is exceeding great; it is deliverance from guilt, from sin itself, from the anger of God, and from the miseries of hell.

How great is the *good conferred!* The objective good is the infinite God, and the glorious Redeemer, Jesus Christ. How great is the love of the Father, and the Son! And how near the relation between them and the true believer. How close the union, how intimate the communion, and ultimately how clear will be the vision in glory.

There are great *communications* made to the believing soul, on earth, but how much greater in heaven. Then their conformity to God will be perfect, their enjoyment of him will be full, their honour great and unsullied, and the glory of body and soul ineffable. The riches of the Christian are immense; all things are included in his treasure. Pleasures unspeakably and inconceivably great await him; rivers of delight, fulness of joy; and all of infinite duration.

The benefit procured for us, is *doubly* infinite. Our deliverance is an infinite benefit, because the evil we are delivered from, is infinite; and the positive good bestowed is eternal; *viz.* the full enjoyment of all those blessings merited.

Section IV.

How Angels are benefitted by the Salvation of Men.

So hath the wisdom of God contrived this affair, that the benefit of what he has done therein, should be so extensive, as to reach the elect angels. It is for men that the work of redemption is wrought out; and yet the benefit of things done in this work is not confined to them, though all that is properly called *redemption*, or included in it, is confined to men. The angels cannot partake in this, having never fallen; yet they have great indirect benefit by it.—God hath so wisely ordered, that what has been done in this directly and especially for men, should redound to the exceeding benefit of all intelligent creatures who are in favour with God. The benefit of it is so diffusive as to reach heaven itself. So great and manifold is the good attained in this work, that those glorious spirits who are so much above us, and were so highly exalted in happiness before, yet should receive great addition hereby.—I will show *how* in some particulars.

1. The angels hereby see a great and wonderful manifestation of the glory of God. The happiness of angels as well as of men consists very much in beholding the glory of God. The excellency of the divine Being is a most delightful subject of contemplation to the saints on earth; but much more to the angels in heaven. The more holy any being is, the more sweet and delightful will it be to him to behold the glory and beauty of the supreme Being.—Therefore the beholding of the glory of God must be ravishing to the holy angels, who are perfect in holiness, and never had their minds leavened with sin. The manifestations of the glory of God, are as it were the food that satisfies the angels; they live thereon. It is their greatest happiness.

It is without doubt much of their employment to behold the

glory of God appearing in his works. Therefore this work of redemption greatly contributes to their happiness and delight, as the glory of God is so exceedingly manifested by it. For what is done, is done in the sight of the angels, as is evident by many passages of holy scripture. And they behold the glory of God appearing herein with entertainment and delight; as it is manifest by 1 Pet. i. 12. *Which things the angels desire to look into.*

The angels have this advantage, that now they may behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, where it shines with a peculiar lustre and brightness. 1 Tim. iii. 5. *Great is the mystery of godlines, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.* Perhaps all God's attributes are more gloriously manifested in this work, than in any other that ever the angels saw. There is certainly a fuller manifestation of some of his attributes, than ever they saw before; as is evident by the text. And especially, it is so with respect to the mercy of God, that sweet and endearing attribute of the divine nature. The angels of heaven never saw so much grace manifested before, as in the work of redemption; nor in any measure equal to it. How full of joy doth it fill the hearts of the angels, to see such a boundless and bottomless ocean of love and grace in their God! And therefore with what rejoicing do all the angels praise Christ for his being slain! Rev. v. 11, 12. *And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

2. They have this benefit by it, that hereby Jesus Christ, God-man, is become their head. God, subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was the King of angels, and would have been, if it had not have been for our redemption. But it was owing to what is done in this work, that Jesus Christ, as God-man, becomes the head of the angels.—Christ is now not only the head of angels simply as God, but as God-man. Col. ii. 10. "And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power." Eph. i. 20—22. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but, also, in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church."

This is a part of the exaltation and glory of Christ, which God confers on him as his reward. And not only so, but it is

greatly to the angels' benefit. It is God's manner in his dealings with his elect creatures, in the same works wherein he glorifies himself, or his Son, greatly to benefit them. The same dealings of his that are most for his glory, shall be most for their good. That Christ, God-man, should be made the head of the angels, is greatly to their benefit several ways.

(1.) Because they become hereby more nearly *related* to so glorious a person, the Son of God, than otherwise they would have. The angels esteem it a great honour done them to be related to such a person as Jesus Christ, God-man, who is an infinitely honourable person.

The angels, by Christ becoming their head, are, with the saints, gathered together in one in Christ, Eph. i. 10. They, by virtue hereof, though Christ be not their Redeemer as he is ours, have a right and propriety in this glorious person, as well as we. He is theirs: though not their Saviour, yet he is their head of government, and head of influence.

(2.) Again, this is greatly to their *benefit;* as they are under advantages for a far more intimate converse with God. The divine nature is at an infinite distance from the nature of angels, as well as from the nature of man. This distance forbids a familiarity and intimacy of intercourse. It is, therefore, a great advantage, to the angels, that God is come down to them in a created nature; and, in that nature, is become their head; so that their intercourse and enjoyment may be more intimate. They are invited by the similar qualifications of the created nature, with which the Son of God is invested.

(3.) It is for the benefit of the angels, as hereby the elect of mankind are gathered into their society. Christ, by the work of redemption, gathers in the elect of mankind to join the angels of heaven. Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Men are brought in to join with the angels in their work of praising God; to partake with them of their enjoyments. The angels greatly rejoice at this. They rejoice when but one person is gathered in, as Christ teaches us, Luke xv. 10. "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The heavenly society is made more complete by this accession of the saints to it; they contribute to the happiness of each other. The angels rejoice that others are added to join them and assist them in praising God.—And thus the vacancy, by the fall of angels, is filled up.

(4.) It tends to make the angels to prize their happiness the more, when they see how much it costs to purchase the same happiness for man. Though they knew so much, yet they are not incapable of being taught more and more the

worth of their own happiness. For when they saw how much it cost to purchase the same happiness for man, even the precious blood of the Son of God; this tended to give them a great sense of the infinite value of their happiness. They never saw such a testimony of the value of the eternal enjoyment of God before.

Thus we have shown, how the wisdom of God appears in the work of redemption, in the good ends attained thereby, with respect to God, men, and good angels.

But are there any good ends obtained with respect to *bad* angels, God's grand enemies? Undoubtedly there are, as may appear from the few following considerations. Satan and his angels rebelled against God in heaven, and proudly presumed to try their strength with his. And when God, by his almighty power, overcame the strength of Satan, and sent him like lightning from heaven to hell with all his army; Satan still hoped to get the victory by subtilty. Though he could not overcome by power, yet he hoped to succeed by craft; and so, by his subtilty, to disappoint God of his end in creating this lower world. God, therefore, has shown his great wisdom in overthrowing Satan's design. He has disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that they cannot perform their enterprise; he has carried their counsel headlong.

1. Satan thought to have disappointed God of his glory, which he designed in creating this lower world; and to make mankind be for his own glory, in setting up himself god over them. Now Christ, by what he has done in the work of redemption, has overthrown Satan; and utterly frustrated him as to this end. God is exceedingly glorified in the elect, to the surprise of angels and devils. God by redemption has all the glory, that he intended, and more than either men, angels, or devils imagined that God intended. God might have glorified his justice in the destruction of all mankind. But it was God's design in creating the world, to glorify his goodness and love; and not only to be glorified eventually, but to be served and glorified actually by men. Satan intended to frustrate God of this end; but, by the redemption of Jesus Christ his design is confounded.

2. Another design of the devil, was to gratify his envy in the utter destruction of mankind. But, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, this malicious design of Satan is crossed; because all the elect are brought to their designed happiness; which is much greater than ever Satan thought it was in God's heart to bestow on man. And though some of mankind are left to be miserable, yet that does not answer Satan's end; for this also is ordered for God's glory. No more are left miserable than God saw meet to glorify his justice upon.

One end why God suffered Satan to do what he did in procuring the fall of man, was that his Son might be glorified in conquering that strong, subtle, and proud spirit, and triumphing over him. How glorious doth Christ Jesus appear in baffling and triumphing over this proud king of darkness, and all the haughty confederate rulers of hell! How glorious a sight is it to see the meek and patient Lamb of God leading that proud, malicious and mighty enemy in triumph! What songs doth this cause in heaven! It was a glorious sight in Israel to see David carrying the head of Goliath in triumph to Jerusalem. It appeared glorious to the daughters of Israel, who came out with timbrels and with dances, and sang, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.* But how much more glorious to see the son of David, the Son of God, carrying the head of the spiritual Goliath, the champion of the armies of hell, in triumph to the heavenly Jerusalem! It is with a principal view to this, that Christ is called, *the Lord of hosts, or armies, and a man of war*, Exod. xv. 3. And Psalm xxiv. 8. *Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*

Section V.

In this Way of Salvation wonderful Glory redounds to God, as the effect of Divine Wisdom.

1. By this contrivance for our redemption, God's greatest dishonour is made an *occasion* of his greatest glory. Sin is a thing by which God is greatly dishonoured; the nature of its principle is enmity against God, and contempt of him. And man, by his rebellion, has greatly dishonoured God. But this dishonour, by the contrivance for our redemption, is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's glory that ever was. Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good. It is the nature of a principle of sin that it seeks to dethrone God: but this is hereby made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's royal majesty and glory that ever was. By sin, man has slighted and despised God: but this is made an occasion of his appearing the more greatly honourable. Sin casts contempt upon the authority and law of God: but this, by the contrivance for our redemption, is made the occasion of the greatest honour done to that same authority, and to that very law. It was a greater honour to the law of God that Christ was subject to it, and obeyed it, than if all mankind had obeyed it. It was a greater honour to God's authority that Christ showed such great respect, and such entire subjection to it, than the perfect obedience of all the angels in

heaven. Man by his sin showed his enmity against the holiness of God; but this is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God's holiness. The holiness of God never appeared to so great a degree, as when God executed vengeance upon his own dear Son.

2. So has the wisdom of God contrived that those attributes are glorified in man's salvation, whose glory seemed to require his *destruction*. When man had fallen, several attributes of God seemed to require his destruction. The justice of God requires, that sin be punished as it deserves: but it deserves no less than eternal destruction. God proclaims it as a part of the glory of his nature, that he will in no wise clear the guilty, Exodus xxxiv. 7. The holiness of God seemed to require man's destruction; for God by his holiness infinitely hates sin. This seemed to require therefore that God should manifest a proportionable hatred of the sinner; and that he should be for ever an enemy unto him. The truth of God seemed also to require man's destruction; for eternal death was what God had threatened for sin, one jot or tittle of which threatening cannot by any means pass away. But yet so has God contrived, that those very attributes not only allow of man's redemption, and are not inconsistent with it, but they are glorified in it. Even vindictive justice is glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ. The holiness of God, or his holy hatred of sin, that seemed to require man's damnation, is seen in Christ's dying for sinners. So herein also is manifested and glorified the truth of God, in the threatenings of the law.

3. Yea, it is so ordered now that the glory of these attributes *requires* the salvation of those that believe. The justice of God that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now as much requires the salvation of those that believe in Christ, as ever before it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may, in justice, demand it, on account of what his surety has done. For Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin; so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from the punishment; it is but a piece of justice, that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And, again, the believer may demand eternal life, because it has been merited by Christ, by a merit of condignity. So is it contrived, that that justice that seemed to require man's destruction, now requires his salvation.

So the truth of God that seemed to require man's damnation, now requires his salvation. At the same time that the threatening of the law stands good, there is a promise of eternal life to many who have broken the law. They both stand good at the same time; and the truth of God requires

that both should be fulfilled. How much soever they seemed to clash, yet so is the matter contrived in this way of salvation, that both are fulfilled, and do not interfere one with another.

At the very time that God uttered the threatening, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;* and at the time that Adam had first eaten the forbidden fruit; there was then an existing promise, that many thousands of Adam's race should obtain eternal life. This promise was made to Jesus Christ, before the world was. What a difficulty and an inconsistence, did there seem to be here? But it was no difficulty to the wisdom of God, that the promise and the threatening should be both fully accomplished to the glory of God's truth in each of them. Psal. lxxxv. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

4. Those very attributes which seemed to require man's destruction, are *more glorious* in his salvation, than they would have been in his destruction. The revenging justice of God, is a great deal more *manifested* in the death of Christ, than it would have been if all mankind had been sufferers to all eternity. If man had remained under the guilt and imputation of sin, the justice of God would not have had such a *trial*, as it had, when his own Son was under the imputation of sin. If all mankind had stood guilty, and justice had called for vengeance upon them, that would not have been such a trial of the inflexibleness and unchangeableness of the justice of God, as when his own Son, who was the object of his infinite love, and in whom he infinitely delighted, stood with the imputation of guilt upon him.

This was the greatest trial that could be, to manifest whether God's justice was perfect and unchangeable, or not; whether God was so just, that he would not, upon any account, abate of what justice required; and whether God would have any respect to persons in judgment.

So the *majesty* of God appears much more in the sufferings of Christ, than it would have done in the eternal sufferings of all mankind. The majesty of a prince, appears greater in the just punishment of great personages, under the guilt of treason, than of inferior persons. The sufferings of Christ, have this advantage over the eternal sufferings of the wicked, for impressing upon the minds of the spectators a sense of the dread majesty of God, and his infinite hatred of sin; *viz.* that the eternal sufferings of the wicked never will be seen actually accomplished, and finished; whereas they have seen that which is equivalent to those eternal sufferings actually fulfilled and finished in the sufferings of Christ.

5. Such is the wisdom of this way of salvation, that the more any of the elect have dishonoured God, the more is God glorified in this redemption. Such wonders as these are ac-

complished by the wisdom of this way of salvation. Such things as these, if they had been proposed to any created intelligence, would have seemed strange and unaccountable paradoxes, till the counsels of divine wisdom concerning the matter were unfolded.

So sufficient is this way of salvation, that it is not inconsistent with any of God's attributes to save the chief of sinners. However great a sinner any one has been, yet God can, if he pleases, save without any injury to the glory of any one attribute. And, not only so, but the more sinful any one has been, the more doth God glorify himself in his salvation. The more doth he glorify his power, that he can redeem one in whom sin so abounds, and of whom Satan has such strong possession.—The greater triumph has Christ over his grand adversary, in redeeming, and setting at liberty from his bondage those that were his greatest vassals. The more doth the sufficiency of Christ appear, in that it is sufficient for such vile wretches.

The more is the sovereignty, and boundless extent of the mercy of God manifested, in that it is sufficient to redeem those that are most undeserving. Rom. v. 20. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

Section VI.

How the wisdom of God appears in the Manner and Circumstances of obtaining the Good intended.

We now come to take notice of some wonderful circumstances of the attainment of our good, hereby; which shows the great wisdom of this contrivance.

1. So hath God contrived in this way, that a sinful creature should become not guilty; and that he who has no righteousness of his own, should become righteous. These things, if they had been proposed, would have appeared contradictions to any but the divine understanding.

If it had been proposed to any created intelligence, to find out a way in which a *sinful* creature should not be a *guilty* creature, how impossible would it have been judged, that there should be any way at all. It would doubtless have been judged impossible but that he who has committed sin, must stand guilty of the sin he has committed; and if sin necessarily obliges to punishment, it must oblige him who has committed it. If punishment and sin be inseparable, then that punishment and the sinner are inseparable. If the law denounces death to the person who is guilty of sin, and if it be impossible that the law should not take place, then he who has committed sin must die. Thus any created understanding would have thought.

And if it had been proposed, that there should be some way found out, wherein man might be righteous without fulfilling righteousness himself: so that he might reasonably and properly be looked upon and accepted as a righteous person, and adjudged to the reward of righteousness, and yet have no righteousness of his own, but the contrary—that he should be righteous by the righteousness of the law, by a perfect righteousness, and yet have broken the law and done nothing else but break it—this doubtless would have been looked upon as impossible and contradictious.

But yet the wisdom of God has truly accomplished each of these things. He hath accomplished that men, though sinners, should be without guilt in that he hath found out a way that the threatenings of the law should truly and properly be fulfilled, and punishment be executed on sin, and yet not on the sinner. The sufferings of Christ answer the demands of the law, with respect to the sins of those who believe in him; and justice is truly satisfied thereby. And the law is fulfilled and answered by the obedience of Christ, so that his righteousness should properly be our righteousness. Though not performed by us, yet it is properly and reasonably accepted for us, as much as if we had performed it ourselves. Divine wisdom has so contrived, that such an interchanging of sin and righteousness should be consistent, and most agreeable with reason, with the law, and God's holy attributes. For Jesus Christ has so united himself to us, and us to him, as to make himself ours, our head. The love of Christ to the elect is so great, that God the Father looks upon it proper and suitable to account Christ and the elect as one; and accordingly to account what Christ does and suffers, as if they *did* and *suffered* it.—That love of Christ which is so great as to render him willing to put himself in the stead of the elect, and to bear the misery that they deserved, does, in the Father's account, so unite Christ and the elect, that they may be looked upon as legally one.

2. It shows wonderful wisdom that our good should be procured by such seemingly unlikely and opposite means, as the humiliation of the Son of God. When Christ was about to undertake that great work of redemption, he did not take that method that any creature-wisdom would have thought the most proper. Creature-wisdom would have determined that in order to his effectually and more gloriously accomplishing such a great work, he should rather have been exalted higher, if it had been possible, rather than humbled so low.—Earthly kings and princes, when they are about to engage in any great and difficult work, will put on their strength, and will appear in all their majesty and power, that they may be successful.—But when Christ was about to perform the great work of redeeming a lost world, the wisdom of God took an opposite method, and

determined that he should be humbled and abased to a mean state, and appear in low circumstances. He did not deck himself with glory, but laid it aside. He emptied himself. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. *Being in the form of God—he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*—Creature-wisdom would have thought that Christ, in order to perform this great work, should deck himself with all his strength ; but divine wisdom determined, that he should be made weak, or put on the infirmities of human nature.

And why did divine wisdom determine that he should become thus weak ? It was that he might be subject to want, and to suffering, and to the power and malice of his enemies. But then what advantage could it be to him in this work, to be subject to the power and malice of his enemies ? It was the very design on which he came into the world, to overcome his enemies. Who would have thought that this was the way to overthrow them, that he should become weak and feeble, and for that very end that he might be subject to their power and malice. But this is the very means by which God determined, that Christ should be subject to their power, that they might prevail against him, so as to put him to disgrace, and pain, and death.

What other but divine wisdom could ever have determined, that this was the way to be taken in order to being successful in the work of our redemption ! This would have appeared to creature-wisdom the most direct course to be frustrated that could be devised. But it was indeed the way to glorious success, and the only way. *The foolishness of God is wiser than men.* 1 Cor. i. 25. God has brought strength out of weakness, glory out of ignominy and reproach. Christ's shame and reproach are the only means by which a way is made to our eternal honour.

The wisdom of God hath made Christ's humiliation the means of our exaltation ; his coming down from heaven is that which brings us to heaven. The wisdom of God hath made life the fruit of death. The death of Christ was the only means by which we could have eternal life. The death of a person who was God, was the only way by which we could come to have life in God.—Here favour is made to arise out of wrath : our acceptance into God's favour out of God's wrath upon his own Son. A blessing rises out of a curse ; our everlasting blessedness, from Christ being made a curse for us. Our righteousness is made to rise out of Christ's imputed guilt. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God, 2 Cor. v. 21. By such wonderful means hath the wisdom of God procured our salvation.

3. Our sin and misery, by this contrivance are made an occasion of our greater blessedness. This is a very wonderful thing. It would have been a very wonderful thing if we had been merely restored from sin and misery, to be as we were before; but it was a much more wonderful thing that we should be brought to a higher blessedness than ever; and that our sin and misery should be the occasion of it, and should make way for it.

(1.) It was wonderful that *sin* should be made the occasion of our greater blessedness; for sin deserves misery. By our sin we had deserved to be everlastingly miserable; but this is so turned by divine wisdom, that it is made an occasion of our being more happy—It was a strange thing that sin should be the occasion of any thing else but misery: but divine wisdom has found out a way whereby the sinner might not only escape being miserable, but that he should be happier than before he sinned; yea, than he would have been if he had never sinned at all. And this sin and unworthiness of his, are the occasion of this greater blessedness.

(2.) It was a wonderful thing that man's own *misery* should be an occasion of his greater happiness. For happiness and misery are contraries; and man's misery was very great. He was under the wrath and curse of God, and condemned to everlasting burnings.—But the sin and misery of man, by this contrivance, are made an occasion of his being more happy, not only than he was before the fall, but than he would have been, if he never had fallen.

Our first parents, if they had stood and persevered in perfect obedience, till God had given them the fruit of the tree of life as a seal of their reward, would probably have been advanced to higher happiness: for they before were but in a state of probation of their reward. And it is not to be supposed but that their happiness was to have been greater after they had persisted in obedience, and had actually received the reward, than it was while they were in a state of trial for it. But by the redemption of Christ, the sin and misery of the elect are made an occasion as their being brought to a higher happiness than mankind would have had, if they had persisted in obedience till they had received the reward.—For,

1st. Man is hereby brought to a greater and nearer *union* with God. If man had never fallen, God would have remained man's friend; he would have enjoyed God's favour, and so would have been the object of Christ's favour, as he would have had the favour of all the persons of the Trinity.—But now Christ becoming our surety and Saviour, and having taken on him our nature, occasions between Christ and us an union of a quite different kind, and a nearer relation than otherwise would have been. The fall is the occasion of Christ's becoming our head, and the church his body. And believers are become

his brethren, and spouse, in a manner that otherwise would not have been. And by our union with Christ we have a greater union with God the Father. We are sons by virtue of our union with the natural Son of God. Gal. iv. 4—6. *When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And therefore Christ has taught us, in all our addresses to God, to call him our Father, in like manner as he calls him Father. John xx. 17. *Go tell my brethren, behold I ascend to my Father, and your Father.*

This is one of the wonderful things brought about by the work of redemption, that thereby our separation from God, is made an occasion of a greater union, than was before, or otherwise would have been.—When we fell, there was a dreadful separation made betwixt God and us, but this is made an occasion of a greater union. John xvii. 20—23. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*

2dly. Man now has greater *manifestations* of the *glory* and *love* of God, than otherwise he would have had. In the manifestations of these two things, man's happiness principally consists. Now man, by the work of redemption, has greater manifestation of both, than otherwise he would have had. We have already spoken particularly of the glory of God, and what advantages even the angels have by the discoveries of it in this work; but, if *they* have such advantages, much more will *man*, who is far more directly concerned in this affair than they. Here are immediately greater displays of the love of God, than man had before he fell; or, as we may well suppose, than he would have had, if he had never fallen. God now manifests his love to his people, by sending his Son into the world, to die for them. There never would have been any such testimony of the love of God, if man had not fallen.

Christ manifests his love, by coming into the world, and laying down his life. This is the greatest testimony of divine love that can be conceived. Now, surely, the greater discoveries God's people have of his love to them, the more occasion will they have to rejoice in that love. Here will be a delightful theme for the saints to contemplate to all eternity, which they never could have had, if man never had fallen, *viz.* the dying love of Christ. They will have occasion now to sing that

song for ever, Rev. i. 5, 6. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to whom be glory and dominion for ever: *Amen.*"

3dly. Man now has greater *motives* offered him to love God than otherwise he ever would have had. Man's happiness consists in mutual love between God and man; in seeing God's love to him, and in reciprocally loving God. And the more he sees of God's love to him, and the more he loves God, the more happy must he be. His love to God is as necessary in order to his happiness, as the seeing of God's love to him; for he can have no joy in beholding God's love to him, any otherwise than as he love's God. This makes the saints prize God's love to them; for *they love him.* If they did not love God, to see his love to them would not make them happy. But the more any person loves another, the more will he be delighted in the manifestations of that other's love. There is provision, therefore, made for both in the work of redemption. There are greater *manifestations* of the love of God to us, than there would have been if man had not fallen; and, also, there are greater *motives* to love him, than otherwise there would have been. There are greater *obligations* to love him, for God has done more for us to win our love. Christ hath died for us.

Again; man is now brought to a more universal and immediate and *sensible dependence* on God, than otherwise he would have been. All his happiness is now *of* him, *through* him, *in* him. If man had not fallen, he would have had all his happiness of God, by his own righteousness; but now it is by the righteousness of Christ. He would have had all his holiness of God, but not so sensibly; because then he would have been holy from the beginning, as soon as he received his being; but now, he is first sinful and universally corrupt, and afterward is made holy. If man had held his integrity, misery would have been a stranger to him; and, therefore, happiness would not have been so sensible a derivation from God, as it is now, when man looks to God from the deeps of distress, cries repeatedly to him, and waits upon him. He is convinced, by abundant experience, that he has no place of resort but God, who is graciously pleased, in consequence of man's earnest and persevering suit, to appear to his relief, to take him out of the miry clay and horrible pit, set him upon a rock, establish his goings, and put a new song into his mouth.—By man's having thus a more immediate, universal, and sensible dependence, God doth more entirely secure man's undivided respect. There is a greater motive for man to make God his all in all,—to love him, and rejoice in him, as his only portion.

4thly. By the contrivance for our salvation, man's sin and misery are but an occasion of his being brought to a more full and free *converse* with, and *enjoyment* of God, than otherwise would have been. For, as we have observed already, the union is greater; and the greater the union, the more full the communion, and intimate the intercourse. Christ is come down to man, in his own nature; and hereby he may converse with Christ more intimately, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow. This advantage is more than what the angels have. For Christ is not only in a *created* nature, but he *is in man's own nature.* We have, also, advantages for a more full *enjoyment* of God. By Christ's incarnation, the saints may see God with their bodily eyes, as well as by an intellectual view. The saints, after the day of judgment, will consist of both body and soul; they will have outward as well as spiritual sight. It is now ordered by divine wisdom, that God himself, or a divine person, should be the principal entertainment of both these kinds of sight, spiritual and corporeal; and the saints in heaven shall not only have an intellectual sight of God, but they shall see a divine person as they see one another; not only spiritually, but outwardly. The body of Jesus Christ will appear with that transcendent visible majesty and beauty, which is exceedingly expressive of the divine majesty, beauty, and glory. The body of Christ shall appear with the glory of God upon it, as Christ tells us, Matt. xvi. 27. *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.* Thus to see God will be a great happiness to the saints. Job comforted himself that he should see God with his bodily eyes, Job xix. 26. *And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

5thly. Man's sin and misery is made an occasion of his greater happiness, as he has now a greater relish of happiness, by reason of his knowledge of both. In order to happiness there must be two things, *viz.* union to a proper object—and a relish of the object. Man's misery is made an occasion of increasing both these by the work of redemption. We have shown already, that the union is increased; and so is the relish too, by the knowledge man now has of evil. These contraries, good and evil, heighten the sense of one another. The forbidden tree was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil; of *evil*, because by it we came to the experience of evil; of *good* because we should never have known so well what good was, if it had not been for that tree. We are taught the value of good, by our knowledge of its contrary, evil. This teaches us to prize good, and makes us the more to relish and rejoice in it. The saints know something what a state of sin and alienation from God is. They know something what the anger of God is, and what it is to be in danger of hell. And this makes them the

more exceedingly to rejoice in the favour and in the enjoyment of God.

Take two persons; one who never knew what evil was, but was happy from the first moment of his being, having the favour of God, and numerous tokens of it; another who is in a very doleful and undone condition. Let there be bestowed upon these two persons the same blessings [subjectively,] the same good things; and let them be objectively in the same glorious circumstances,—and which will rejoice most?—Doubtless he that was brought to this happiness out of a miserable and doleful state. So the saints in heaven will for ever the more rejoice in God, and in the enjoyment of his love, for their being brought to it out of a most lamentable state and condition.

SECTION VII.

Some wonderful Circumstances of the Overthrow of Satan.

THE wisdom of God greatly and remarkably appears in so exceedingly baffling and confounding all the subtilty of the old serpent. Power never appears so conspicuous as when opposed, and conquering opposition. The same may be said of wisdom; it never appears so brightly, and with such advantage, as when opposed by the subtilty of some very crafty enemy; and in baffling and confounding that subtilty. The devil is exceeding subtile. The subtilty of the serpent is emblematical of his, Gen. iii. 1. He was once one of the bright intelligences of heaven, and one of the brightest, if not the very brightest of all. And all the devils were once morning stars, of a glorious brightness of understanding. They still have the same faculties, though they ceased to be influenced and guided by the holy Spirit of God; and so their heavenly wisdom is turned into hellish craft and subtilty.—God in the work of redemption hath wondrously baffled the utmost craft of the devils, and though they are all combined to frustrate God's designs of glory to himself, and goodness to men.—The wisdom of God appears very glorious herein. For,

1. Consider the weak and seemingly despicable means and weapons that God employs to overthrow Satan. Christ poured the greater contempt upon Satan in the victory that he obtained over him, by reason of the means of his preparing himself for it, and the weapons he hath used. Christ chooses to encounter Satan in the human nature, in a poor, frail, afflicted state. He did as David did. David, when going against the Philistine, refused Saul's armour, a helmet of brass, a coat of mail, and his sword. No, he puts them all off. Goliath comes mightily armed against David, with a helmet of brass upon his

head, a coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels of brass, greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders; a spear, whose staff was like a weaver's beam; and the spear's head weighing six hundred shekels of iron. And besides all this, he had one bearing a shield before him. But David takes nothing but a staff in his hand, and a shepherd's bag and a sling; and he goes against the Philistine. So the weapons that Christ made use of were his poverty, afflictions and reproaches, sufferings and death. His principal weapon was his cross, the instrument of his own reproachful death. These were seemingly weak and despicable instruments, to wield against such a giant as Satan. And doubtless the devil disdained them as much as Goliath did David's staves and sling. But with such weapons as these has Christ, in a human, weak, mortal nature, overthrown and baffled all the craft of hell.

Such disgrace and contempt has Christ poured upon Satan. David had a more glorious victory over Goliath for conquering him with such mean instruments: and Samson over the Philistines for killing so many of them with such a despicable weapon as the jaw-bone of an ass. It is spoken of in scripture as a glorious triumph of Christ over the devil, that he should overcome him by such a despicable weapon as his cross. Col. ii. 14, 15. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*—God shows his great and infinite wisdom in taking this method, to confound the wisdom and subtilty of his enemies. He hereby shows how easily he can do it, and that he is infinitely wiser than they. 1 Cor. i. 27—29. *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are.*

2. God has hereby confounded Satan with his own weapons. It is so contrived in the work of redemption, that our grand enemy should be made a means of his own confusion: and that, by those very things whereby he endeavours to rob God of his glory, and to destroy mankind, he is made an instrument of frustrating his own designs. His most subtile and powerful endeavours for accomplishing his designs are made a means of confounding them, and of promoting the contrary. Of this, I will mention but two instances. *First.* His procuring man's fall is made an occasion of the contrary to what he designed. Indeed he has hereby procured the ruin of multitudes of mankind, which he aimed at. But in this he does not frustrate God's design from all eternity to glorify himself: and the misery

of multitudes of mankind will prove no content to him, but will enhance his own misery.

What Satan did in tempting man to fall, is made an occasion of the contrary to what he intended, in that it gave occasion for God to glorify himself the more; and giveth occasion for the elect being brought to higher happiness.

The happy state of man was envied by Satan. That man who was of earthly original should be advanced to such honours, when he who was originally of a so much more noble nature should be cast down to such disgrace, his pride could not bear. How then would Satan triumph, when he had brought him down!

The devil tempted our first parents with this, that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, they should be as gods.—It was a lie in Satan's mouth; for he aimed at nothing else but to fool man out of his happiness, and make him his own slave and vassal, with a blinded expectation of being like a god.—But little did Satan think that God would turn it so, as to make man's fall an occasion of God's becoming man: and so an occasion of our nature being advanced to a state of closer union to God.

By this means it comes to pass, that one in man's nature now sits at the right hand of God, invested with divine power and glory, and reigns over heaven and earth with a god-like power and dominion. Thus is Satan disappointed in his subtilty. As he intended that saying, *Ye shall be as gods*, it was a lie to decoy and befool man. Little did he think, that it would be in such manner verified, by the incarnation of the Son of God. And this is the occasion also of all the elect being united to this divine person, so that they become one with Christ. Believers are as members and parts of Christ. Yea the church is called Christ. Little did Satan think, that his telling that lie to our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods," would be the occasion of their being members of Christ the Son of God.

Again, Satan is made a means of his own confusion in this:—It was Satan's design, in tempting man to sin, to make man his captive and slave for ever; to have plagued, and triumphed over him. And this very thing is a means to bring it about, that man instead of being his vassal should be his judge. The elect, instead of being his captives, to be for ever tormented and triumphed over by him, shall sit as judges to sentence him to everlasting torment. It has been the means, that one in man's nature, should be his supreme judge. It was man's nature that Satan so envied, and sought to make a prey of. But Jesus Christ at the last day shall come in man's nature; and the devils shall be all brought to stand trembling at his bar; and he shall judge and condemn them, and execute the wrath of God

upon them. And not only shall Christ in the human nature judge the devils, but all the saints shall judge them with Christ as assessors with him in judgment. 1 Cor. vi. 3. *Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

Secondly. In another instance Satan is made a means of his own confusion; that is, in his procuring the death of Christ. Satan set himself to oppose Christ as soon as he appeared.—He sought, by all means, to procure his ruin. He set the Jews against him. He filled the minds of the scribes and Pharisees with the most bitter persecuting malice against Christ. He sought by all means to procure his death; and that he might be put to the most ignominious death. We read "that Satan entered into Judas, and tempted him to betray him." Luke xxii. 3. And Christ speaks of his sufferings as being the effects of the power of darkness, Luke xxii. 53. *When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*—But Satan hereby overthrows his own kingdom. Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. And this was the very thing that did it, *viz.* the blood and death of Christ. The cross was the devil's own weapon; and with this weapon he was overthrown: As David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword.

Christ thus making Satan a means of his own confusion was typified of old by Samson's getting honey out of the carcass of the lion. There is more implied in Samon's riddle, *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness*, than ever the Philistines explained. It was verified by Christ in a far more glorious manner. God's enemies and ours are taken in the pit which they themselves have digged: and their own soul is taken in the net which they have laid. Thus we have shown, in some measure, the wisdom of this way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

Section VIII.

The Superiority of this Wisdom to that of the Angels.

The wisdom of this contrivance appears to have been above the wisdom of the angels by the following things.

1. It appears that the angels did not fully comprehend the contrivance, till they saw it accomplished. They knew that man was to be redeemed, long before Christ came into the world: but yet they did not comprehend it fully until they saw it. This is evident by the expression in the text. *That now might be known unto the principalities—the manifold wisdom of God;* i. e. Now the work is actually accomplished by Jesus Christ. Which implies that it was now new to them.—If they understood no more of it now. than they had all along, the apostle

would never have expressed himself so; for he is speaking of it as a mystery, in a measure kept hid until now.

Now it is to be considered, that the angels had four thousand years to contemplate this affair; and they did not want inclination and desire to understand and look into it, as the scripture teaches us. They had also a great deal to put them upon an attentive contemplation of it. For when it was made known that God had such a design, it must appear a new and wonderful thing to them. They had seen their fellow-angels destroyed without mercy; and this redeeming of the fallen sinful creature, was quite a new thing. It must needs be astonishing to them, when God had revealed this design of mercy to them presently after the fall: and had given an intimation of it, in saying, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." They knew that God had such a design; for they were, from the beginning, ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those that were the heirs of salvation.—They were present at the institution of the typical dispensation, that was so full of shadows of gospel truth. Psalm lxix. 17.

The angels contemplating the contrivance of our redemption was typified by the posture of the cherubims over the mercy-seat, which was the lid of the ark. Their emblems were made bending down towards the ark and mercy-seat.—This is what the apostle Peter is thought to have some reference to, 1 Pet. i. 12. Yet the angels, though for four thousand years they had been studying this contrivance, did not fully comprehend it till they saw it accomplished. This shows that the wisdom of it was far above theirs; for if they could not fully comprehend it after it had been revealed that there was such a design—and after much of it had already been made known in the Old Testament—how much less could they have found it out of themselves.

Consider for what end this wisdom of God was made known unto the angels, *viz.* that they might admire and prize it. It was made known to them, that they might see how manifold, how great and glorious it is; that they might see the unspeakable "depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God," as the apostle expresses it, Rom. xi. 33.——It was manifested to them that they might see the glory of God in it, and how great and wonderful the mystery was. 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.* Now if the wisdom of it were not far above their own understanding, this would not be shown them for the express purpose that they might admire and praise God for it.

2. It appears to be above the wisdom of the angels, because they are still contemplating it; and endeavouring to see more and more of it. Indeed there is room for their faculties to em-

ploy themselves to all eternity. It is evident from 1 Pet. i. 11, 12, that they are still employing themselves in endeavouring to see more and more of God's wisdom appearing in the work of redemption, *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.* They still desire to look into it, after they have seen it accomplished. They do not so perfectly comprehend all the wisdom that is to be seen in it; but they are contemplating, looking into it, that they may see more and more; but there will still be room enough in this work to employ the angelical understandings.

Section IX.

The Subject Improved.

I. Hence we may learn the blindness of the world, that the wisdom appearing in the work of redemption, is no more admired in it. God has revealed this his glorious design and contrivance to the world; sends forth his gospel, and causes it to be preached abroad, in order to declare to the world, that his infinite wisdom has been engaged for man's salvation. But how little is it regarded! There are some who have their eyes opened to behold the wondrous things of the gospel, who see the glory of God in, and admire the wisdom of it. But the greater part are wholly blind to it. They see nothing in all this, that is any way glorious and wonderful. Though the angels account it worthy of their most engaged and deep contemplation; yet the greater part of men take little notice of it. It is all a dull story, and dead letter to many of them. They cannot see any thing in it above the wisdom of men. Yea, the gospel to many seems foolishness.

Though the light that shines in the world be so exceeding glorious, yet how few are there that do see it. The glory of God's wisdom in this work, is surpassing the brightness of the sun: but so blind is the world, that it sees nothing. It does not know that the Sun of righteousness shines. Thus it has been in all ages, and wherever the gospel has been preached; ministers of the word of God, in all ages, have had occasion to say, Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Thus the prophets were sent to many with that errand, Isa. vi. 9, 10. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

When Christ, that glorious prophet came, and more fully revealed the counsels of God concerning our redemption, how many were then blind! how much did Christ complain of them! How blind were the scribes and Pharisees, the most noted sect of men among the Jews for wisdom; they beheld no glory in that gospel which Christ preached unto them; which gave him occasion to call them fools and blind, Matt. xxiii. 17.—So it was again in the apostles' times. In all places where they preached, some believed, and some believed not, Acts xxviii. 24. *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed,* chap. xiii. 48. *The election obtained it, but the rest were blinded,* Rom. xi. 7. And so it is still in those places where the gospel is preached. There are a few who see the glory of the gospel. God has a small number whose eyes he opens, who are called out of darkness into marvellous light, and who have an understanding to see the wisdom and fitness of the way of life. But how many are there, who sit under the preaching of the gospel all their days, and yet never see any divine wisdom or glory in it! To their dying day, they are unaffected with it. When they hear it, they see nothing to attract their attention, much less excite any admiration. To preach the gospel to them, will serve very well to lull them asleep; but produces very little other effect upon them. This shows the exceeding wickedness of the heart of man. How affecting the thought, that infinite wisdom should be set on work, so as to surprise the angels, and to entertain them from age to age;—and that to men, though so plainly set before them, it should appear foolishness! 1 Cor. i. 18. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.*

II. This is a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel. The gospel stands in no need of external evidences of its truth and divinity. It carries its own light and evidence with it.—There is that in its nature that sufficiently distinguishes it, to those who are spiritually enlightened, from all the effects of human invention. There are evident appearances of the divine perfections; the stamp of divine glory, of which this of the divine wisdom is not the least part.

There is as much in the gospel to show that it is no work of men, as there is in the sun in the firmament. As persons of mature reason, who look upon the sun, and consider the nature of it, its wonderful height, its course, its brightness and heat, may know that it is no work of man; so, if the gospel be duly considered, if the true nature of it be seen, it may be known that it is no work of man, and that it must be from God. And

if the *wisdom* appearing in the gospel be duly considered, it will be seen as much to excel all human wisdom, as the sun's light excels the light of fires of our own kindling. The contrivance of our salvation is of such a nature, that no one can rationally conclude that man had any hand in it. The nature of the contrivance is such, so out of the way of all human thoughts, so different from all human inventions; so much more sublime, excellent, and worthy, that it does not savour at all of the craft or subtilty of man; it savours of God only.

If any are ready to think man might have found out such a way of salvation for sinners—so honourable to God, to his holiness and authority—they do not well consider the scantiness of human understanding. Mankind were of a poor capacity for any such undertaking; for, till the gospel enlightened the world, they had but miserable notions of what was honourable to God. They could have but poor notions of what way would be suitable to the divine perfections; for they were wofully in the dark about these divine perfections themselves, till the gospel came abroad in the world. They had strange notions about a Deity. Most of them thought there were many gods. *They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things*, Rom. i. 23. They attributed vices to God. Even the philosophers, their wisest men, entertained but imperfect notions of the Supreme Being. How, then, should men find out a way so glorious and honourable to God, and agreeable to his perfections, who had not wisdom enough to get any tolerable notions of God, till the gospel was revealed to them. They groped in the dark. Their notions showed the infinite insufficiency of man's blind understanding for any such undertaking, as the contriving of a way of salvation every way honourable to God, and suitable to the needs of a fallen creature.

But since the gospel has told what God's counsels are, and how he has contrived a way for our salvation, men are ready to despise it, and foolishly to exalt their own understanding; and to imagine they could have found out as good a way themselves. When, alas! men, of themselves, had no notion of what was honourable to God, and suitable for a divine Being. They did not so much as think of the necessity of God's law being answered, and justice satisfied. And if they had, how dreadfully would they have been puzzled, to have found out the way how! Who would have thought of a trinity of persons in the godhead; and that one should sustain the rights of the godhead; and another should be the Mediator; and another should make application of redemption! Who would have thought of such a thing as three distinct persons, and yet but one God! All the same Being, and yet three persons! Who

would have thought of this, in order to have found out a way for satisfying justice! Who would have thought of a way for answering the law that threatened eternal death, without the sinner's suffering eternal death! And who would have thought of any such thing as a divine person *suffering the wrath of God!* And, if they had, who would have contrived a way *how* he should suffer, since the divine nature cannot suffer!

Who would have thought of any such thing as God becoming man; two natures, and but one person! These things are exceedingly out of the way of human thought and contrivance. It is most unreasonable to think that the world, who, till the gospel enlightened them, were so blind about the nature of God and divine things, should contrive such a way that should prove thus to answer all ends; every way to suit what the case required; most glorious to God, and answerable to all man's necessities. Every thing is so fully provided for, and no absurdity to be found in the whole affair, but all speaking forth the most perfect wisdom. That there should be no infringement upon holiness or justice; nothing dishonourable to the majesty of God; no encouragement to sin; all possible motives to holiness; all manner of happiness provided; and Satan so confounded and entirely overthrown, how truly wonderful!

And if we suppose, that all this, notwithstanding, was the invention of men, whose invention should it be? Who should be pitched upon as the most likely to invent it? It was not the invention of the Jews; for they were the most bitter enemies to it. The wise men among them, when they first heard of it, conceived malice against it, and persecuted all that held this doctrine. It was not the invention of the Heathen, for they knew nothing about it till the apostles preached it to them; and it appeared a very foolish doctrine to the wise men among them. The doctrine of Christ crucified, was not only to the Jews a stumbling-block, but also to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23. Besides, it was contrary to all their notions about a Deity, and they knew nothing about the fall of man, and the like, till the gospel revealed it to them.

It was not the invention of the apostles; for the apostles, of themselves, were no way capable of any such learned contrivance. They were poor fishermen and publicans, an obscure and illiterate sort of men, till they were extraordinarily taught. They were all surprised, when they first heard of it. When they heard that Christ must die for sinners, they were offended at it: and it was a long while before they were brought fully to receive it.

There is but one way left; and that is, to suppose, that Christ was a mere man, a very subtile crafty man, and that he invented it all: but this is as unreasonable as the rest; for it would have been all against himself, to invent a way of salva-

tion by his own crucifixion, a most tormenting and ignominious death.

III. How great a sin they are guilty of, who despise and reject this way of salvation! When God has manifested such unsearchable riches of wisdom; when all the persons of the Trinity have, as it were, held a consultation from all eternity in providing a way of salvation for us sinful, miserable worms; a way that should be sufficient, and every way suitable for us;—a way that should be in all things complete, whereby we might have, not only full pardon of all our sins, and deliverance from hell, but, also, full blessedness in heaven for ever:—how must God needs be provoked, when, after all, men reject this way of salvation!

When salvation comes to be preached, and is offered to them in this way; when they are invited to accept of its benefits, and yet they despise and refuse it, they thus practically deny it to be a wise way, and call this wisdom of God foolishness.—How provoking must it be, when such a poor creature as man shall rise up, and find fault with that wisdom which is so far above the wisdom of angels! This is one thing wherein consists the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, that it implies a rejecting and despising of divine wisdom in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.—Unbelief finds fault with the wisdom of God in the choice of the person, for performing this work. It dislikes the person of Christ. It sees no form nor comeliness in him, nor beauty wherefore it should desire him.

That person whom the wisdom of God looked upon as the fittest person of any, the only fit person, is despised and rejected by unbelief.—Men, through unbelief, find fault with the salvation itself that Christ has purchased: they do not like to be saved as Christ would save. They do not like to be made holy, and to have such a happiness as is to be had in God for a portion.

It may not be amiss here to mention two or three ways whereby persons are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of God in the way of salvation.

1. They are guilty of a provoking contempt, who live in a *careless neglect* of their salvation; they who are secure in their sins, and are not much concerned about either salvation or damnation. This is practically charging God with folly.—Its language is, that all is in vain, and to no purpose; that God hath contrived and consulted for our salvation, when there was no need of it. They are well enough as they are. They do not see any great necessity of a Saviour. They like that state they are in, and do not much desire to be delivered out of it. They do not thank him for all his consultation and contrivance, and think he might have spared his cost. God has greatly minded that which they do not think worth minding; and has contrived abundantly for that which they do not trouble their heads about.

2. They are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of this way of salvation, who go about to *contrive ways of their own.* They who are not content with salvation by the righteousness of Christ, which God has provided, are for contriving some way of being saved by their own righteousness. These find fault with the wisdom of God's way, and set up their own wisdom in opposition to it. How greatly must God be provoked by such conduct.

3. Those that entertain discouraged and *despairing apprehensions* about their salvation, cast contempt on the wisdom of God. They think that because they have been such great sinners, God will not be willing to pardon them; Christ will not be willing to accept of them. They fear that Christ, in the invitations of the gospel, does not mean such wicked creatures as they are; that because they have committed so much sin, they have sinned beyond the reach of mercy. They think it is in vain for them to seek for salvation. These cast contempt on the wisdom of God in the way of salvation, as though it were not all-sufficient;—as though the wisdom of God had not found out a way sufficient for the salvation of great sinners.

Section X.

The Misery of Unbelievers.

Unbelievers have no portion in this matter. There is a most glorious way of salvation, but you, who are unbelievers, have no interest in it. The wisdom of God hath been gloriously employed for the deliverance of men from a miserable, doleful state; but you are never the better for it, because you reject it. If you continue in that state, this wisdom will do you no good.

Christ is a glorious person; every way fit to be a Saviour of sinners; a person who has power sufficient, wisdom sufficient, merit sufficient, and love sufficient for perfecting this work. And he is the only fit person: but you have no right in him; you can lay claim to no benefit by his power, wisdom, love, or merits.—This wisdom of God hath found out a way whereby this Saviour might satisfy justice, and fulfil the law for us; a way whereby he might be capable of suffering for us; but you have no lot in the incarnation, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

The wisdom of God hath contrived a way of salvation that there should be procured for us perfect and everlasting happiness. Here is that happiness procured which is most suitable to our nature, and answerable to the salvation of our souls. Here is a most glorious portion, *viz.* the Divine Being himself, with his glorious perfections. Here it is purchased, that we

should see God face to face;—that we should converse and dwell with God in his own glorious habitation;—that we should be the children of God, and be conformed to him. Here are the highest honours, the most abundant riches, the most substantial satisfying pleasures for evermore. Here we have prepared all needed good, both for the souls and bodies of sinners; all needed earthly good things, while here; and glory, for both body and soul hereafter, for ever.

But you are never the better for all this. You have no lot, nor portion in any of it. Notwithstanding all this rich provision, you remain in the same miserable state and condition, in which you came into the world. Though the provision of the gospel be so full, yet your poor soul remains in a famishing, perishing state. You remain dead in trespasses and sins; under the dominion of Satan; in a condemned state, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and being daily exposed to the dreadful effects of it in hell. Notwithstanding all this provision, you remain wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. O that you might turn to God through Jesus Christ, be numbered among his disciples and faithful followers, and so be entitled to their privileges! They have an interest in this glorious Saviour, and are entitled to all the ineffable blessedness of his kingdom, so far as their capacities will admit; but you remain without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no well grounded hope, and without God in the world. Further consider a few things.

First. It argues the *great misery* of sinners, that the wisdom of God should be exercised to such a degree in order to find out a way to deliver them from it. Their case surely was most deplorable, since it required infinite wisdom to find out a way for their deliverance. The wisdom of angels was not sufficient: nothing but divine wisdom could reach and remedy their case. And all the persons of the Trinity did enter into a consultation about it. If man's misery were not very great, divine wisdom would not have been exercised for his deliverance from it. God would not contrive and do things so wonderful in a trivial affair. If the salvation of a sinner were not a great salvation, from an exceeding great misery, it is not to be supposed, that God's wisdom should be more signalized in this affair than in any other whatever.

But so it is; this contrivance seems to be spoken of in scripture as the master-piece of divine wisdom. This work of redemption is represented as most wonderful, and spoken of in scripture in the most exalted manner of any work of God.—Doubtless therefore salvation is a great thing; and consequently the misery that sinners are saved from, is a great and unspeakable misery. Now this is the misery that you are all in, who

remain in a natural condition. This is the condemnation you lie under. This is the wrath of God that abides upon you. The wisdom of God knew it to be a very doleful thing for a person to be in a natural state, and therefore did so exercise itself to deliver miserable sinners out of it. But this is the state that many among us do yet remain in.

Secondly. Consider, that if you continue in the state you are in, you will be so far from being the better for this contrivance, that you will be as much *more miserable* for it. The justice and wisdom of the way of salvation will be your condemnation. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.* John iii. 19. If you continue in that state you are now in, it would have been better for you, if Christ had never died for sinners; if God had left all mankind to perish, as he did the fallen angels. Your punishment then would have been light in comparison of what it will be now. You will have greater sins by far to answer for; and all your sins will be abundantly the more aggravated.

Since I have been upon this subject, I have observed, that the work of redemption is an occasion of the elect being brought to greater happiness than man could have had, if he had not fallen. And it is also true as to reprobates, that it will be an occasion of their having greater misery than they would have had, if there had been no redemption. 2 Cor. ii. 15. *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other we are the savour of life unto life.* If you perish at last, you will be the more miserable for the benefits of the gospel being so glorious, and that because your crime in rejecting and despising them will be the more heinous. Heb. ii. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*

Thirdly. Whilst you continue an unbeliever, *the more you hear* of this way of salvation, your condition will become the more miserable. The longer you sit under the preaching of the gospel, the more doleful does your case grow. Your guilt continually increases. For your refusals of the gospel, and your rejections of this way of salvation, are so much the oftener repeated. Every time you hear the gospel preached, you are guilty of a renewed rejection of it, the guilt of which therefore you will have lying upon you. And the more you hear of the suitableness and glory of this way, the greater is your guilt who still continue to reject it. Every new illustration of the wisdom and grace of God in redemption, adds to your guilt. Matt. xxiii. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!*——What adds to your misery is, that as long as it continues, it is a growing evil.

Fourthly. Consider the danger there is, that you will never have any lot or portion in this matter; seeing there are but few that have. Christ has told us, that straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. There have been but few in all ages of the world. Many seek; and many hope that they shall obtain. There are but few that intend to be damned; while many hope that they shall, some way or other, find means to escape eternal misery. But, after all, there are but few saved; or obtain the benefits of redemption.

Section XI.

Exhortation to come to Christ.

I conclude with an use of exhortation to come to Christ, and accept of salvation in this way. You are invited to come to Christ, heartily to close with him, and trust in him for salvation; and, if you do so, you shall have the benefit of this glorious contrivance. You shall have the benefit of all; as much as if the whole had been contrived for you alone. God has already contrived every thing that is needful for your salvation; and there is nothing wanting but your consent. Since God has taken this matter of the redemption of sinners into his own hand, he has made thorough work of it; he has not left it for you to finish. Satisfaction is already made, righteousness is already wrought out: death and hell are already conquered. The Redeemer has already taken possession of glory, and keeps it in his hands to bestow on them who come to him. There were many difficulties in the way, but they are all removed. The Saviour has already triumphed over all, and is at the right hand of God, to give eternal life to his people.

Salvation is ready brought to your door; and the Saviour stands, knocks, and calls, that you would open to him, that he might bring it in to you. There remains nothing but your consent. All the difficulty now remaining, is with your own heart. If you perish now, it must be wholly at your door. It must be because you would not come to Christ that you might have life; and because you virtually choose death rather than life. Prov. viii. 36. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death.* All that is now required of you, is, that your heart should close with Christ as a Saviour. Here consider,

1. That the wisdom of God hath so contrived, that he hath forestalled all your *objections.* If you make objections against Christ, and the way of salvation, they must be all unreasonable. You cannot reasonably object that your sins are of such a na-

ture, that God's honour will not allow of your pardon. It is true, God insists upon his own honour. He is a God that will be honoured, and his majesty shall be vindicated: and, when sinners cast contempt upon him, his honour requires vengeance. But God has so contrived this way, that his honour may be repaired by the punishment of sin, without the sinners suffering, how great soever the sin be. Herein the wisdom of this way appears, that there is a sufficiency for the greatest and most heinous transgressors.

You cannot object that God the father will not be willing to accept you, for the Mediator's sake; for he hath chosen his own Son to be a Mediator, to cut off any such objections. So you may be sure, that God will receive you, if you go to him through Christ. You cannot object, that God the father has not given sufficient assurance of salvation to believers; for the principal things, those which would have been most difficult to believe, are already fulfilled: God hath already given his Son to die for us. This, before it was accomplished, was much more strange, and difficult to believe, than that he should give eternal life to sinners, after Christ died for them. Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

There is no room to doubt, but that, if we accept of Christ, God will give eternal life; for he hath given it already into the hands of our Saviour for us. He hath intrusted him with the whole affair. He hath given all things into his hands, that he might give eternal life to as many as should come to him. The Father hath appointed him who died for believers, to be their judge, to have the whole determination of the matter, and the disposal of the reward, in his own hand. And you cannot doubt, but that Christ will be willing to bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. For if he is not willing to bestow it, surely he never would have died to purchase it. Who can think, that Christ would be so desirous of sinners being saved, as to undergo so much for it; and not be willing to let them have it, when he had obtained it for them.—Consider,

2. The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be in the *person* of the Saviour all manner of attractives to draw us to him. He has in him, all possible excellency. He is possessed of all the beauty and glory of the Godhead. So that there can be no manner of excellency, nor degree of excellency, that we can devise, but what is in the person of the Saviour. But yet so redundant has the wisdom of God been, in providing attractives in order that we should come to Christ, it hath so ordered, that there should also be all human excellencies in him. If there be any thing attractive in this consideration, that Christ is one in our own nature, one of us, this is true of

Christ. He is not only in the divine, but in the human nature. He is truly a man, and has all possible human excellencies. He was of a most excellent spirit; wise and holy, condescending and meek, and of a lowly, benign, and benevolent disposition.

Again: The wisdom of God hath chosen a person of great love to sinners, and who should show that love in the most endearing manner possible. What more *condescending* love can there be, than the love of a divine person to such worms of the dust! What *freer* love can there be, than love to enemies! What *greater* love can there be, than dying love! And what more endearing *expression* of love, than dying for the beloved! And the wisdom of God hath so contrived, that Christ shall sustain that office which should most tend to endear him to us, and draw us to him: the office of a Redeemer, a redeemer from eternal misery, and the purchaser of all happiness.

And if all this be not enough to draw us, the wisdom of God hath ordered more; it hath provided us a Saviour that should offer himself to us in the most endearing relation. He offers to receive us as friends; to receive us to an union to himself, to become our spiritual husband and portion for ever.—And the wisdom of God hath provided us a Saviour that woos in a manner that has the greatest tendency to win our hearts. His word is most attractive. He stands at our door and knocks. He does not merely command us to receive him: but he condescends to apply himself to us in a more endearing manner. He intreats and beseeches us in his word and by his messengers.

3. The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be all manner of attractives in the *benefits* that Christ offers you. There are not only the excellencies of the person of Christ to draw you to him, but the desirable benefits he offers. Here is what is most suitable to the cravings of the human nature. Men when distressed and burdened, long for ease and *rest:* here it is offered to us in Christ. *Come unto me*, says he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Men when in fear of danger, long for *safety:* here it is provided for us in Christ. God promises that he will become a shield and buckler, a strong rock and high tower to those that trust in him. —Those that mourn need *comfort:* Christ tells us that *he came to comfort those that mourn*, Isa. lxi. 2.—The blind need to have their eyes opened. The light is sweet to men: Christ offers to anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see glorious light. He will be our sun, and the light of God's countenance.—What is more dear to men than *life!* Christ hath purchased for men, that they should live for ever. Psal. xxi. 4. *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days forever and ever.*—How greatly is a crown prized and admired by the children of men? And Christ offers this;—not

a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible and far more glorious crown, than any worn by earthly kings: a crown of glory, the lustre of which never shall fade, nor decay; with an everlasting kingdom.—Do men love *pleasures?* Here are pleasures for evermore. What could there be more to draw our hearts to Jesus Christ, and to make us willing to accept of him for our Saviour, with all his unspeakable benefits!

SERMON IV.

JOSEPH'S GREAT TEMPTATION,

AND

GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE.

GENESIS XXXIX. 12.

And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

We have here, and in the context, an account of that remarkable behaviour of Joseph in the house of Potiphar, which was the occasion both of his great affliction, and also of his high advancement and prosperity in the land of Egypt.

We read, in the beginning of the chapter, how Joseph, after he had been so cruelly treated by his brethren, and sold into Egypt for a slave, was advanced in the house of Potiphar, who had bought him. Joseph was one that feared God, and therefore God was with him; and so influenced the heart of Potiphar his master, that instead of keeping him as a mere slave, to which purpose he was sold, he made him his steward and overseer over his house, and all that he had was put into his hands; insomuch, that we are told, ver. 6, *that he left all he had in his hand; and he knew not ought that he had, save the bread which he did eat.*—While Joseph was in these prosperous circumstances, he met with a great temptation in his master's house. We are told that, he being a goodly person and well favoured, his mistress cast her eyes upon and lusted after him, and used all her art to tempt him to commit uncleanness with her.

Concerning this temptation, and his behaviour under it, many things are worthy to be noted. Particularly,

We may observe, how *great* the temptation was, that he was under. It is to be considered, that Joseph was now in his *youth;* a season of life when persons are most liable to be overcome by temptations of this nature. And he was in a state of unexpected *prosperity* in Potiphar's house; which has a tendency to lift persons up, especially young ones, whereby commonly they more easily fall before temptations.

And then, the *superiority* of the person that laid the temptation before him, rendered it much the greater. She was his mistress, and he a servant under her. And the *manner* of her tempting him. She did not only carry herself so towards Joseph, as to give him cause to *suspect* that he might be admitted to such criminal converse with her; but she directly *proposed* it to him; plainly manifesting her disposition to it. So that here was no such thing as a suspicion of her unwillingness to deter him, but a manifestation of her desire to entice him to it. Yea, she appeared greatly engaged in the matter. And there was not only her desire manifested to entice him, but her authority over him to enforce the temptation. She was his mistress, and he might well imagine, that if he utterly refused a compliance, he should incur her displeasure; and she, being his master's wife, had power to do much to his disadvantage, and to render his circumstances more uncomfortable in the family.

And the temptation was the greater, in that she did not only tempt him once, but frequently, *day by day*, ver. 10. And at last became more violent with him. She caught him by his garment, saying, *Lie with me.*

His *behaviour* was very remarkable under these temptations. He absolutely refused any compliance with them: he made no reply that manifested as though the temptation had gained at all upon him: so much as to hesitate about it, or at all deliberate upon it. He complied in no *degree* either to the gross act she proposed; or any thing *tending* towards it, or that should at all be gratifying to her wicked inclination. And he persisted resolute and unshaken under her continual solicitations, ver. 10. *And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.* He, to his utmost, avoided so much as being where she was. And the motives and principles, from which he acted, manifested by his reply to her solicitations, are remarkable.—He first sets before her, how injuriously he should act against his master, if he should comply with her proposal: *Behold my master —hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife.* But he then proceeded to inform her of that, which above all things, deterred him from a compliance, *viz.* that it would be great wickedness, and sin against God.—*How shall I do this, and sin against God?* He would not do any such thing, as he would not injure his master; but that which influenced him more than all on this occasion, was the fear of sinning against God. On this account he persisted in his resolution to the last.

In the text we have an account of his behaviour under the last and greatest temptation that he had from her. This temptation was great, as it was at a time when there was no body

in the house, but he and his mistress, ver. 11; there was an opportunity to commit the fact with the greatest secrecy. And at this time it seems that she was more violent than ever before. She caught him by the garment, &c. She laid hold on him, as though she was resolute to attain her purpose of him.

Under these circumstances he not only refused her, but fled from her, as he would from one that was going to assassinate him; he escaped as for his life. He not only would not be guilty of such a fact, but neither would he by any means be in the house with her, where he should be in the way of her temptation.—This behaviour of Joseph is doubtless recorded for the instruction of all. Therefore from the words I shall observe, that it is our duty, not only to avoid those things that are themselves sinful, but also, as far as may be, those things that lead and expose to sin.

Section I.

Why we should avoid what tends to sin.

Thus did Joseph: he not only refused actually to commit uncleanness with his mistress, who enticed him; but refused to be there, where he should be in the way of temptation, ver. 10. He refused to lie by her, or be with her. And in the text we are told that *he fled and got him out;* would by no means be in her company. Though it was no sin in itself, for Joseph to be in the house where his mistress was; but under these circumstances it would expose him to sin. Joseph was sensible he had naturally a corrupt heart, that tended to betray him to sin; and therefore he would by no means be in the way of temptation; but with haste he fled, he ran from the dangerous place. Inasmuch as he was exposed to sin in that house, he fled out of it with as much haste as if it had been on fire; or full of enemies, who stood ready with drawn swords to stab him to the very heart. When she took him by the garment, he left his garment in her hands; he had rather lose his garment, than stay a moment there, where he was in such danger of losing his chastity.

I said, that persons should avoid things that expose to sin, *as far as may be;* because it is possible that persons may be *called* to expose themselves to temptation; and when it is so, they may hope for divine strength and protection under temptation.

It may be a man's indispensable duty to undertake an office, or a work, attended with a great deal of temptation. Thus *ordinarily* a man ought not to run into the temptation of being persecuted for the true religion; lest the temptation should be too hard for him; but should avoid it, as much as may be; therefore Christ thus directs his disciples, Matt. x. 23. *When ye*

be persecuted in one city flee to another. Yet the case may be so, that a man may be called not to flee from persecution; but to run the venture of such a trial, trusting in God to uphold him under it. Ministers and magistrates may be obliged to continue with their people in such circumstances; as Nehemiah says, Neh. vi. 11. *Should such a man as I flee?* So the apostles.—Yea, they may be called to go into the midst of it; to those places where they cannot reasonably expect but to meet with such temptations. So Paul went up to Jerusalem, when he knew beforehand, that *there bonds and affliction awaited him*, Acts xx. 23.

So in some other cases, the necessity of affairs may call upon men to engage in some business that is peculiarly attended with temptations. But when it is so they are indeed least exposed to sin; for they are always safest in the way of duty. Prov. x. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.* And though there be many things by which they may have extraordinary temptations, in the affairs they have undertaken, yet if they have a clear call, it is no presumption to hope for divine support and preservation in it.

But for persons needlessly to expose themselves to temptation, and to do those things that tend to sin, is unwarrantable, and contrary to that excellent example set before us. And that we ought to avoid not only those things that are in themselves sinful, but also those things that lead and *expose* to sin, is manifest by the following arguments.

1. It is very evident that we ought to use our utmost endeavours to avoid sin: which is inconsistent with needlessly doing those things, that expose and lead to sin. And the greater any evil is, the greater care and the more earnest endeavours, does it require to avoid it. Those evils that appear to us very great and dreadful, we use proportionably great care to avoid. And therefore the greatest evil of all, requires the greatest and utmost care to avoid it.

Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinitely great and excellent Being, and so a violation of infinite obligation: therefore however great our care be to avoid sin, it cannot be more than proportionable to the evil we would avoid. Our care and endeavour cannot be infinite, as the evil of sin is infinite; but yet it ought to be to the utmost of our power; we ought to use every method that tends to the avoiding of sin. This is manifest to reason.—And not only so, but this is positively required of us in the word of God. Josh. xxii. 5. "Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your soul." Deut. iv. 15, 16. "Take ye therefore good heed

unto yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves." Chap. xii. 30. "Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared," &c. Luke xi. 36. "Take heed and beware of covetousness." 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Deut. iv. 9. "Take heed to thyself, keep thy soul diligently." These and many other texts of scripture, plainly require of us, the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin.

But how can he be said to use the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin, that voluntarily does those things which naturally expose and lead to sin? How can he be said with the utmost possible caution to avoid an enemy, that voluntarily lays himself in his way? How can he be said to use the utmost possible caution to preserve the life of his child, that suffers it to go on the edge of precipices or pits; or to play on the borders of a deep gulf; or to wander in a wood, that is haunted by beasts of prey?

2. It is evident that we ought to avoid those things that expose and lead to sin; because a due sense of the evil of sin, and a just hatred of it, will necessarily have this effect upon us, to cause us so to do.—If we were duly sensible of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself; and dread it even as we dread damnation. But those things that men exceedingly dread, they naturally shun; and they avoid those things that they apprehend expose to them. As a child, that has been greatly terrified by the sight of any wild beast, will by no means be persuaded to go where it apprehends that it shall fall in its way.

As sin in its own nature is infinitely hateful, so in its natural tendency it is infinitely dreadful. It is the tendency of all sin, eternally to undo the soul. Every sin naturally carries hell in it! Therefore, all sin ought to be treated by us, as we would treat a thing that is infinitely terrible. If any one sin, yea, the least sin, do not necessarily bring eternal ruin with it, this is owing to nothing but the free grace and mercy of God to us, and not to the nature and tendency of sin itself. But certainly, we ought not to take the less care to avoid sin, or all that tends to it, for the freeness and greatness of God's mercy to us, through which there is hope of pardon; for that would be indeed a most ungrateful and vile abuse of mercy. Were it made known to us, that if we ever voluntarily committed any particular act of sin, we should be damned without any remedy or escape, should we not exceedingly dread the commission of such? Should we not be very watchful and careful to stand at the greatest distance from that sin: and from every thing that might expose us to it; and that has any tendency to stir up our lust, or to betray us to such an act of sin? Let us then consider, that though the next voluntary act of known sin, shall not necessarily and unavoidably issue

in certain damnation ; yet it will certainly *deserve* it. We shall thereby really deserve to be cast off, without any remedy or hope ; and it can only be owing to free grace, that it will not certainly and remedilessly be followed with such a punishment. And shall we be guilty of such a vile abuse of God's mercy to us, as to take encouragement from it, the more boldly to expose ourselves to sin ?

3. It is evident that we ought not only to avoid sin, but things that expose and lead to sin : because this is the way we act in things that pertain to our temporal interest.—Men avoid not only those things that are themselves the hurt or ruin of their temporal interest, but also the things that tend or expose to it. Because they love their temporal lives, they will not only actually avoid killing themselves, but theyare very careful to avoid those things that bring their lives into danger ; though they do not certainly know but they may escape.

They are careful not to pass rivers and deep waters on rotten ice, though they do not certainly know that they shall fall through and be drowned. They will not only avoid those things that would be in themselves the ruin of their estates—as setting their own houses on fire, and burning them up with their substance ; taking their money and throwing it into the sea, &c. ; but they carefully avoid those things by which their estates are exposed. They have their eyes about them ; are careful with whom they deal ; watchful that they be not over-reached in their bargains ; and that they do not lay themselves open to knaves and fraudulent persons.

If a man be sick of a dangerous distemper, he is careful to avoid every thing that tends to increase the disorder ; not only what he knows to be mortal, but other things that he fears may be prejudicial to him. Men are in this way wont to take care of their temporal interest. And therefore, if we are not as careful to avoid sin, as we are to avoid injury in our temporal interest, it will show a regardless disposition with respect to sin and duty ; or that we do not much care though we do sin against God. God's glory is surely of as much importance and concern as our temporal interest. Certainly we should be as careful not to be exposed to sin against the majesty of heaven and earth, as men are wont to be of a few pounds ; yea, the latter are but mere trifles compared with the former.

4. We are wont to do thus by our dear earthly friends.—We not only are careful of those things wherein the destruction of their lives, or their hurt and calamity in any respect, directly consist ; but are careful to avoid those things that but remotely tend to it. We are careful to prevent all occasions of their loss ; and are watchful against that which tends in any wise, to deprive them of their comfort or good name ; and the reason is, because they are very dear to us. In this manner, men are

wont to be careful of the good of their own children, and dread the approaches of any mischief that they apprehend they are, or may be exposed to. And we should take it hard if our friends did not do thus by us.

And surely we ought to treat God as a dear friend: we ought to act towards him, as those that have a sincere love and unfeigned regard to him; and so ought to watch and be careful against all *occasions* of that which is contrary to his honour and glory. If we have not a temper and desire so to do, it will show that whatever our pretences are, we are not God's sincere friends, and have no true love to him.—If we should be offended at any that have professed friendship to us, if they treated us in this manner, and were no more careful of our interest; surely God may justly be offended, that we are no more careful to his glory.

5. We would have God, in his providence towards us, not to order those things that tend to our hurt, or expose our interest; therefore certainly we ought to avoid those things that lead to sin against him.

We desire and love to have God's providence such towards us, as that our welfare may be well secured. No man loves to live exposed, uncertain, and in dangerous circumstances. While he is so, he lives uncomfortably, in that he lives in continual fear. We desire that God would so order things concerning us, that we may be safe from fear of evil; and that no evil may come nigh our dwelling; and that because we dread calamity. So we do not love the appearance and approaches of it; and love to have it at a great distance from us. We desire to have God to be to us as a wall of fire round about us, to defend us; and that he would surround us as the mountains do the vallies, to guard us from every danger, or enemy; that so no evil may come nigh us.

Now this plainly shows, that we ought, in our behaviour towards God, to keep at a great distance from sin, and from all that exposes to it; as we desire God in his providence to us, should keep calamity and misery at a great distance from us, and not to order those things that expose our welfare.

6. Seeing we are to pray we may not be led into temptation; certainly we ought not to run ourselves into it.—This is one request that Christ directs us to make to God in that form of prayer, which he taught his disciples—"Lead us not into temptation." And how inconsistent shall we be with ourselves if we pray to God, that we should not be led into temptations; and at the same time, we are not careful to avoid temptation; but bring ourselves into it, by doing those things that lead and expose to sin. What self-contradiction is it for a man to pray to God that he may be kept from that which he takes no care to avoid? By praying that we may be kept from

temptation, we profess to God that being in temptation, is a thing to be avoided; but by running into it, we show that we choose the contrary, *viz.* not to avoid it.

7. The apostle directs us to avoid those things that are in themselves lawful, but tend to lead others into sin; surely then we should avoid what tends to lead ourselves into sin.—The apostle directs, 1 Cor. viii. 9, "Take heed lest—this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." Rom. xiv. 13. "That no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Ver. 15. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat." Ver. 20, 21. "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."—Now if this rule of the apostle be agreeable to the word of Christ, as we must suppose, or expunge what he says out of the canon of the scripture; then a like rule obliges more strongly in those things that tend to lead *ourselves* into sin.

8. There are many precepts of scripture, which directly and positively imply, that we ought to avoid those things that tend to sin.

This very thing is commanded by Christ, Matt. xxvi. 41, where he directs us to "watch lest we enter into temptation." But certainly running ourselves into temptation, is the reverse of watching against it.—We are commanded to abstain from all *appearance* of evil; *i. e.* do by sin as a man does by a thing the sight or appearance of which he hates: and therefore will avoid any thing that looks like it; and will not come near or in sight of it.

Again, Christ commanded to separate from us, those things that are stumbling-blocks, or occasions of sin, however dear they are to us. Matt. v. 29. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Ver. 30. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." By the right hand offending us, is not meant its paining us; but the word in the original signifies, being a stumbling-block; if thy right hand prove a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall; *i. e.* an occasion to sin. Those things are called offences or stumbling-blocks in the New Testament, which are the occasions of falling into sin.—Yea, Christ tells us, we must avoid them, however dear they are to us, though as dear as our right hand or right eye. If there be any practice that naturally tends and exposes us to sin, we must have done with it; though we love it never so well, and are never so loth to part with it; though it be as contrary to our inclination, as to cut off our own right hand, or pluck out our own right eye: and that upon pain of damnation: for it is inti-

mated that if we do not, we must go with two hands and two eyes into hell fire.

Again: God took great care to forbid the children of Israel those things that tended to lead them into sin. For this reason, he forbade them marrying strange wives, (Deut. vii. 3, 4.) "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them,—for they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods." For this reason they were commanded to destroy all those things that the nations of Canaan had used in their idolatry; and if any were enticed over to idolatry, they were to be destroyed without mercy; though ever so near and dear friends. They were not only to be parted with, but stoned with stones; yea, they themselves were to fall upon them, and put them to death, though son or daughter, or their bosom friend. (Deut. xiii. 6, &c.) "If thy brother,—or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods,—thou shalt not consent unto him,—neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death."

Again, The wise man warns us to avoid those things that tend and expose us to sin; especially the sin of uncleanness. Prov. vi. 27. "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burnt?—So, whosoever touches her, shall not be innocent." This is the truth held forth; avoid those customs and practices, that naturally tend to stir up lust. And there are many examples in scripture, which have the force of precept; and recorded, as not only worthy, but demand our imitation. The conduct of Joseph is one; and that recorded of King David is another. Psal. xxxix. 1, 2. "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good:"—even from good that is, he was so watchful over his words, and kept at such a great distance from speaking what might in any way tend to sin; that he avoided, in certain circumstances, speaking what was in itself lawful; lest he should be betrayed into that which was sinful.

9. A prudent sense of our own weakness, and exposedness to yield to temptation, obliges us to avoid that which leads or exposes to sin.

Whoever knows himself, and is sensible how weak he is, and his constant exposedness to sin; how full of corruption his heart is, which like fuel, is ready to catch fire, and bring destruction upon him—how much he has in him to incline him to sin, and how unable he is to stand of himself—who is sensible of this,

and has any regard of his duty, will he not be very watchful against every thing that may lead and expose to sin? On this account Christ directed us, Matt. xxvi. 41, *To watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation.* The reason is added, the flesh is weak! He who, in confidence of his own strength, boldly runs the venture of sinning, by going into temptation, manifests great presumption, and a sottish insensibility of his own weakness. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.* Prov. xxviii. 26.

The wisest and strongest, and some of the most holy men in the world, have been overthrown by such means. So was David; so was Solomon;—his wives turned away his heart. If such persons so eminent for holiness were this way led into sin, surely it should be a warning to us. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Section II.

What things lead and expose to Sin.

If any thing be made out clearly, from reason and the word of God, to be our duty, this would be enough with all Christians. Will a follower of Christ stand objecting and disputing against what is irrefragably proved and demonstrated to be his duty.

But some may be ready to inquire—How shall we know what things do lead and expose to sin? Let a man do what he will, he cannot avoid sinning, as long as he has such a corrupt heart within him. And there is nothing a man can do, but he may find some temptation in it. And though it be true, that a man ought to avoid those things that lead and expose to sin—And that those things which have a special tendency to expose men to sin, are what we ought to shun, as much as in us lies—yet how shall we judge and determine, what things have a natural tendency to sin; or do especially lead to it?

I would answer in some particulars which are plain and easy; and which cannot be denied without the greatest absurdity.

1. That which borders on those sins, to which the lusts of men's hearts strongly incline them, is of this sort. Men come into the world with many strong and violent lusts in their hearts, and are exceeding prone of themselves to transgress; even in the safest circumstances in which they can be placed. And surely so much the nearer they are to that sin, to which they are naturally strongly inclined; so much the more are they exposed. If any of us who are parents should see our children near the brink of some deep pit; or close by the edge of the precipice of a high mountain; and not only so, but the ground upon which the child stood slippery, and steeply descending directly toward the precipice; should we not reckon a child exposed in such a

case? Should we not be in haste to remove the child from its very dangerous situation?

It was the manner among the Israelites, to build their houses with flat roofs, so that persons might walk on the tops of their houses. And therefore God took care to make it a law among them, that every man should have battlements upon the edges of their roofs; lest any person should fall off and be killed. Deut. xxii. 8. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence." And certainly we ought to take the like care that we do not fall into sin; which carries in it eternal death. We should as it were, fix a battlement, a guard, to keep us from the edge of the precipice. Much more ought we to take care, that we do not go upon a roof that is not only without battlements, but when it is steep, and we shall naturally incline to fall.—Men's lusts are like strong enemies, endeavouring to draw them into sin. If a man stood upon a dangerous precipice, and had enemies about him, pulling and drawing him, endeavouring to throw him down; would he, in such a case, choose, or dare to stand near the edge? Would he look upon himself safe, close on the brink? Would he not endeavour, for his own safety, to keep at a distance?

2. Those things that tend to feed lusts in the imagination, are of this kind.—They lead and expose men to sin. Those things that have a natural tendency to excite in the mind the imagination of that which is the object of the lust, certainly tend to feed and promote that lust. What can be more evident, than that a presenting of the object tends to stir up the appetite? Reason and experience teach this.—Therefore all things, whether words or actions, which have a tendency and expose to sin, tend also to raise in the mind imaginations of what the lust tends to. It is certainly wrong to feed a lust even in the imagination. It is quite contrary to the holy rules of God's words. Prov. xxiv. 9. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Matth. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery." A man by gratifying his lusts in his imagination and thoughts, may make his soul in the sight of God to be a hold of foul spirits; and like a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. And sinful imaginations tend to sinful actions, and outword behaviour in the end. Lust is always first conceived in the imagination, and then brought forth in the outward practice. You may see the progress of it in Jam. i. 15. *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.*—Such things are abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. We are commanded to keep at a great distance from spiritual pollution; and to hate even the very "garment spotted with the flesh." Jude 23.

3. Those things that the experience and observation of mankind show to be ordinarily attended or followed with sin, are of this sort. Experience is a good rule to determine by in things of this nature. How do we know the natural tendency of any thing, but by observation and experience? Men observe and find, that some things are commonly attended and followed with other things; and hence mankind pronounce, that they have a natural tendency to them. We have no other way to know the tendency of any thing. Thus men by observation and experience know that the warmth of the sun, and showers of rain, are attended with the growth of plants; and hence they learn, that they have a tendency to it. So they find by experience, that the bite of some kinds of serpents, is commonly followed with illness and often with death: and hence they learn, that the bite of such serpents has a natural tendency to bring disorder upon the body, and exposes to death.—And so if experience and common observation shows, that any particular practice or custom is commonly attended with that which is very sinful, we may safely conclude that such a practice *tends* to sin; that it leads and exposes to it.

Thus we may determine that tavern-haunting and gaming are things that tend to sin; because common experience and observation show, that those practices are attended with a great deal of sin and wickedness. The observation of all ages and all nations with one voice declares it. It shows where taverns are much frequented for drinking and the like, they are especially places of sin, of profaneness, and other wickedness: and it shows, that those towns, where there is much of this, are places where no good generally prevails. And it also shows, that those persons that are given much to frequenting taverns, are most commonly vicious persons. And so of gaming, as playing at cards; experience shows, that those persons that practise this, do generally fall into much sin. Hence these practices are become infamous among all sober virtuous persons.

4. Another way by which persons may determine of some things that they lead and expose to sin, is by their own experience, or what they have found in themselves.—This surely is enough to convince them, that such things actually lead and expose to sin; for what will convince men, if their own experience will not? Thus if men have found by undeniable experience, that any practice or custom stirs up lust in them, and has betrayed them into foolish and sinful behaviour, or sinful thoughts; they may determine that they lead to sin. If they, upon examining themselves, must own that a custom or practice, has disposed them to the omission of known duty, such as secret or family prayer, and has indisposed them to reading and religious meditation—or if they find, since they have complied with such a custom, they are less watchful of their hearts.

less disposed to any thing that is serious; that the frame of their mind is more light, and their hearts less disposed on the things of another world, and more after vanity—these are *sinful effects;* and therefore if experience shows a custom or practice to be attended with these things, then experience shows that they lead and expose to sin.

5. We may determine whether a thing be of an evil tendency or not, by the effect that an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a general flourishing of religion, has with respect to it. If this puts a stop to any practice or custom, and roots it out; surely it argues, that that practice or custom is of no good tendency. For if there be no hurt in it, and it tends to no hurt, why should the Spirit of God destroy it? The Spirit of God has no tendency to destroy any thing that is neither sinful nor has any tendency to sin. Why should it? Why should we suppose, that he is an enemy to that which has no hurt in it; nor has any tendency to that which is hurtful?

The flourishing of religion has no tendency to abolish or expel any thing that is no way against religion. That which is not against religion will not appear against. It is a rule that holds in all contraries and opposites: the opposition is equal on both sides. So contrary as light is to darkness, so contrary is darkness to light. So contrary as the flourishing of religion is to any custom, just so contrary is that custom to the flourishing of religion. That custom that religion tends to destroy, that custom, if it prevail, tends also to destroy religion. Therefore, if the flourishing of religion, and the outpouring of the Spirit of God, tends to overthrow any custom, that takes place or prevails, we may surely determine, that that custom is either in itself sinful, or tends and exposes to evil.

6. We may determine, by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to them, whether they be things of a sinful tendency or not. If they be things that come with a decay of religion, that creep in as that decays, we may determine they are things of no good tendency. The withdrawing of good, does not let in good, but evil. Evil, not good, comes in, as good gradually ceases. What is it but darkness that comes in, as light withdraws?

Therefore, if there be any decay of religion in the town, or in particular persons, and upon this, any certain customs or practices take place and are allowed, which were wholly abstained from and renounced, when religion was in a more flourishing state; we may safely conclude that such customs and practices are contrary to the nature of true religion; and therefore in themselves sinful, or tending to sin.

7. We may in many things determine, whether any custom be of a good tendency, by considering what the effect would be, if it was openly and universally owned and practised. There

are many things which persons practise somewhat secretly, and which they plead to be not hurtful; but which, if they had suitable consideration to discern the consequence of every body openly practising the same, would soon show a most woful state of things. If therefore there be any custom, that will not bear universal open practice and profession; we may determine that *that* custom is of an ill tendency. For if it is neither sinful in itself, nor tends to any thing sinful, then it is no matter how open it is; for we need not be afraid of that custom being too prevalent and universal, that has no ill tendency in it.

Section III.

A serious Warning to all, and especially young People.

Thus I have mentioned some general rules, by which to determine and judge, what things are of a bad and sinful tendency. And these things are so plain, that for a person to deny them, would be absurd and ridiculous. I would now, in the name of God, *warn all persons* to avoid such things as appear by these rules to lead and expose to sin. And particularly, I would take occasion to warn *young people*, as they would approve themselves fearers of God, to avoid all such things in company, that being tried by these rules, will appear to have a tendency to sin. Avoid all such ways of talking and acting as have tendency to this; and follow the example of Joseph. Not only gross acts of uncleanness, but all degrees of lasciviousness, both in talking and acting, are strictly forbidden in scripture; as what should not be so much as once named among saints or Christians. Gal. v. 9. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." Eph. v. 3, 4, 5. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." We should hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, *i. e.* should hate and shun all that, in the least degree, approaches to any such thing.

And I desire that certain customs, too common among young people, may be examined by those rules that have been mentioned. That custom in particular, of young people of different sexes reclining together, however little is made of it, and however ready persons may be to laugh at its being condemned if it be examined by the rules that have been mentioned it will appear, past all contradiction, to be one of those things that lead and expose to sin. And I believe experience and fact abundantly bear witness to it. It has been one main

thing that has led to the growth of uncleanness in the land. And there are other customs and liberties, customarily used among young people in company, which they who use them know that they lead to sin. They know that they stir up their lusts; and this is the very end for which they do it, to gratify their lusts in some measure. Little do such persons consider, what a holy God they are soon to be judged by, who abominates the impurities of their hearts.—If therefore they do actually stir up and feed lust, then certainly they tend to further degrees and more gross acts. That which stirs up lust, makes it more violent, and does therefore certainly the more expose persons to be overcome by it. How evident and undeniable are these things; and how strange that any should make a derision of them!

Possibly you may be confident of your own strength; and may think within yourself, that you are not in danger, that there is no temptation in these things, but what you are able easily to overcome. But you should consider that the most self-confident are most in danger. Peter was very confident, that he should not deny Christ, but how dreadfully otherwise was the event! If others that have fallen into gross sins, should declare how it was with them; doubtless they would say, that they at first thought there was no danger; they were far from the thought that ever they should commit such wickedness; but yet, by venturing further and further, they fell at last into the foulest and grossest transgressions. Persons may long withstand temptation, and be suddenly overcome at last. None so much in danger, as the most bold. They are most safe, who are most sensible of their own weakness; most distrustful of their own hearts; and most sensible of their continual need of restraining grace. Young persons, with respect to the sin of uncleanness, are dealt with by the devil just as some give an account of serpents charming birds and other animals down into their mouths. If the serpent takes them with his eyes, though they seem to be affrighted by it, yet they will not flee away, but will keep the serpent in sight, and approach nearer and nearer to him, till they fall a prey.

Another custom that I desire may be examined by the forementioned rules, is that of young people of both sexes getting together in companies for mirth, and spending the time together till late in the night, in their jollity. I desire our young people to suffer their ears to be open to what I have to say upon this point, as I am the messenger of the Lord of Hosts to them; and not determine that they will not hearken, before they have heard what I shall say. I hope there are few persons among us so abandoned, as to determine that they will go on in a practice, whether they are convinced that it is unlawful or not; or though it should be proved to them to be unlawful by

undeniable arguments. Let us then examine this custom and practice by what has been said. It has been proved undeniably, that we ought not to go on in a practice that leads and exposes to sin; and rules have been laid down to judge what does thus expose and lead to it, which I think are plain and undeniable. Certainly a Christian will not be unwilling to have his practices examined and tried by the rules of reason and God's word; but will rather rejoice in it. And I desire particularly that the practice may be tried by that sure touchstone of experience. This is one of the rules of trial that have been mentioned; that any custom which the experience and observation of mankind show to be ordinarily attended with sin, may be concluded to be unlawful. And if we look abroad in the country, I doubt not but these two things will be found.

1. That as to those *places*, where there is most of this carried on among young people, (as there is more of it in some places than others,) it will be found, as a thing that universally holds, that the young people there are commonly a loose, vain, and irreligious generation; little regarding God, heaven, or hell, or any thing but vanity. And that commonly in those towns, where most frolicking is carried on, there are the most frequent breakings out of gross sins; fornication in particular.

2. If we go through the country, we shall, for the most part, find, that those *persons* who are most addicted to this practice, are the furthest from serious thought, and are the vainest and loosest upon other accounts. And whence should this be, if such a practice was not sinful, or had not a natural tendency to lead persons into sin?

Now, I appeal to those who have made pretences to serious religion and saving piety. You have formerly pretended to keep up religion in your closets, and in your own souls; now, seriously ask yourselves, whether or no you have not found, that this practice has *indisposed* you to serious religion, and taken off your minds from it? Has it not tended to your neglect of secret prayer? And, if you have not wholly neglected it, have you not found, that you have been abundantly more ready to turn it off in *any* manner, and glad to have done with it? More backward to reading and serious meditation, and such things? And, that your mind has been exceedingly diverted from religion, and that for some time? I do not send you far off to find out whether this custom be not of bad tendency—not beyond the sea, but your own breast; there let the matter be determined.

Let us now try this custom by the effect which the outpouring of the Spirit of God on a people has with respect to it. This we are under great advantage to do; because there has lately been, in this place, the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, that has ever been in New England, and,

it may be, in the world, since the apostles' days. And, it is well known, that, *before* then, the custom *did* prevail in the town; but *after*, the custom was altogether laid aside; and was so for several years.—No account can be given, why the Spirit of God, and the flourishing of religion, should abolish such a custom, unless that custom be either in its nature or tendency, an enemy to the Spirit of God, and to religion.—The fruits of the Spirit of God are good, and, therefore, it is good that this custom should be removed; for this is plainly one of the effects. And, if so, it is because the custom is bad, either in its nature or tendency; otherwise, there would be no good in its being removed. The Spirit of God abolished this custom for this reason, because, if it had been kept up in the town, it would have had a direct tendency to hinder that work which the Spirit was about to do amongst us. This was, undeniably, the reason.

Supposing such a custom had been begun, and set up, by the young people all over the town, in the midst of the time of the late outpouring of the Spirit, all of a sudden; would any wise persons, that have truly the cause of religion at heart, rejoiced at it? Would not every one have concluded, without any hesitation, that there was great danger that it would take off people's minds from religion, and make them vain: and so put an end to the flourishing of religion? Would not every considerate person have thought thus of it? And if such a custom would have had an ill tendency *then*, so it will *now*.

Objection. The town is not in such circumstances now, as it was then: it might have done hurt then, by putting an end to the great concern; but, now, it may do no hurt: for, there is now no such great concern to be interrupted by it.

Answer. Though the town is not in such circumstances now, as it was then, yet there *ought* to be as much engagedness of mind about religion; as much concern among sinners; and as much engagedness among the godly, as then: and it is to our shame that there is not. And, if such a practice would have tended to *destroy* such a religious concern then, it certainly tends to *prevent* it now. It is a rule that will hold, that what has a tendency to destroy a thing when it is, tends to prevent when it is not. And, are we not praying from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from day to day, for such a concern again? And do not those who pretend to be converted, and yet have lately set up this custom, pray for the same? Are you a convert, a saint, and yet not desire that there should be any more pouring out of the Spirit of God? The town has cause to be ashamed of such converts, if it has any such. And if ye do, why do you do what tends to prevent it?

Again; Let this practice be tried by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to it. Now we have a

trial: it is now a time that religion is greatly decayed amongst us; and the effect is, that this custom comes in with this decay. Young people begin again to set up their old custom of *frolicking*, (as it is called,) and spending a great part of the night in it, to the violation of family order. What is the reason, if this custom is not bad, either in its nature or tendency, that it did not come in before, when religion was lively? Why does it stay till it can take the advantage of the withdrawment of religion? This is a sign that it is a custom that shuns a spirit of lively religion, as darkness shuns the light, and never comes in till light withdraws.

And here, again, I would send persons to their own experience. How did this practice come in with you in particular: you, that two or three years ago, seemed to be so engaged in religion? Did it not come in, did you not begin to practise it, as the sense of religion wore off? And what is the matter! Why did you not set up the practice then, when your heart was taken up about reading, meditation, and secret prayer to God? If this do not all stand in the way of them, and is no hindrance to them, why was you not engaged in both together? What account can you give of it? Why did you leave off this practice and custom, or abstain from it? To what purpose is this changing? One while it must be avoided as evil, and, another while practised and pleaded for as good? The making such an alteration, does not look well, nor will it be for the honour of religion, in the eye of the world. For, whether the practice be lawful or not, yet such a thing will surely be improved to our disadvantage. For your avoiding it, then, has this appearance, in the eye of the country, that then you condemned it: and, therefore, your now returning to it, will appear to them as backsliding in you. Such changelings are evermore, in the eye of the world, greatly to the dishonour of their profession, let it be what it will.

Indeed, this custom, as it is practised, does not only tend to sin, but is, in itself, very disorderly, sinful, and shameful. For it is attended late in the night, and in the dead of the night, to the neglect of family prayer, and violating all family order; which is disorder and profaneness. Is it lawful to rob God of his ordinary sacrifices, for the sake of your pleasure, diversion, and jollity? Are you of that mind, that it is a decent thing, that the stated worship of the great God, should give way to your mirth, and your diversions? Is this the way of God's holy children? Those works that are commonly done in the dead of night, seem to have a black mark set upon them by the apostle, and Christians are exhorted to avoid them, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not

in chambering and wantonness." The word here rendered *rioting*, is of far different signification from the term, as used in our laws: for the forcible doing an unlawful thing, by three or more persons assembled together, for that purpose. But the word here properly signifies, a *disorderly convention* of persons, in order to spend their time together in pleasure and jollity. So the word is commonly used in scripture. Prov. xxiii. 20. "Be not amongst riotous eaters of flesh." Prov. xxviii. 7. "He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father." Luke xv. 13.—"wasted his substance with riotous living."—Again, a black mark seems to be set on such in scripture, as in 1 Thess. v. 5—8. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night."

Many of you that have lately set up this practice of frolicking and jollity, *profess* to be children of the light, and of the day! and not to be the children of darkness. Therefore, *walk as in the day;* and do not those works of darkness, that are commonly done at unseasonable hours of the night. Such things are not only condemned by the apostle, but are looked upon as infamous in all ages among sober people, as all past writings manifest. Therefore, it is a thing of bad report, and so forbidden. Phil. iv. 8. *Whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue—any praise, think on these things.*"

Objection. But the wise man allows of this practice, when he says, Eccles. iii. 4, "There is a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

Answer. This is nothing to the purpose; for the utmost that any can pretend that it proves, is, that it may be used under some circumstances; but not at all, that dancing and other things used by our young people in their frolicks, are lawful, in those circumstances: any more than what is said in the same chapter, verse 3,—"*there is a time to kill*," proves that it is lawful for a man to commit murder. To deny that dancing, under any circumstances whatever, was lawful, would be absurd; for there was a religious dancing in the Jewish church, which was a way of expressing their spiritual mirth. So David danced before the Lord. And he calls upon others to praise God in the dance. So there may be other circumstances wherein dancing may not be unlawful. But all this makes nothing to the present purpose; to prove that this particular custom is not of a bad tendency. Besides, when the wise man says, "there is a time to dance," that does not prove, that the dead of the night is the time for it. The same

wise man doth not justify carnal mirth, but condemns it. Eccl. ii. 2. "I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?"

Objection. If we avoid all such things, it will be the way for our young people to be ignorant how to behave themselves in company.

Answer. But consider what this objection comes to. It certainly comes to this, *viz.* That the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon a people, tends to banish all good conduct, good breeding, and decent behaviour from among them; and to sink them down into clownishness and barbarity! The Spirit of God did actually put an end to this practice among us.—But who is not ashamed to make such an objection? Will any of our young converts talk thus? Will you, that think you were converted by the late pouring out of the Spirit of God, and are made holy persons, heirs of eternal life, talk so blasphemously of it?

If our young people are resolute still to go on notwithstanding all that has been said, I hope that those of them who call themselves converted, will first find out some rational, satisfying answer to the arguments that have been used against it. This at least may be reasonably expected of them, seeing they make such a profession. You have this day been partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and therein solemnly renewed your profession.—If after such light set before you, and such mercy given, you will go on, Be it known to you, that your eating now and at other times, will prove only an eating and drinking judgment to yourselves.

And I desire heads of families, if they have any government over their children, or any command of their own houses, would not tolerate their children in such practices, nor suffer such conventions in their houses.—I do not desire that young people should be abridged of any lawful and proper liberties. But this custom can be of no benefit or service in the world: it tends only to mischief.—Satan doubtless would be glad to have such an interest among us as he used to have; and is therefore striving to steal in, while we are sleeping: but let us rouse up ourselves, and vigorously oppose his encroachments. I shall repeat those words of the apostle, Rom. xiii. 12—14, and leave them to the serious consideration of all persons, old and young. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

SERMON V.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM,

OR

THE CHRISTIANS LIFE A JOURNEY TOWARDS HEAVEN.

HEBREWS xi. 13, 14.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

THE Apostle is here exhibiting the excellency of faith, by its glorious effects, and happy issue in the saints of the Old Testament. Having enumerated examples of Abel, Enoch and Noah, of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Jacob, he relates that all "these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." In these words the apostle seems more immediately to refer to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred who came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, as appears by the 15th verse, where he says, "and truly if they had been mindful of that country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned."

Two things may be here observed.

1. The confession which they made concerning themselves to it, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; of this we have a particular account concerning Abraham, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you."* And it seems to have been a general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh. "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."† "I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were."‡

* Gen. xxiii. 4. † Gen. xlvii. 9. ‡ Psal. xxxix. 12.

2. The inference that the apostle draws from hence, viz. *that they sought another country as their home.* "For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country." In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared that this is not their country, that this is not the place where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly that this is not their settled abode; but that they have respect to some other country, which they seek and to which they are travelling.

Section I.

That this life ought to be so spent by us, as to be only a journey, or pilgrimage, towards heaven.

Here I would observe,

1. That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven. We should *seek first the kingdom of God.** We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness; to be with God; and dwell with Jesus Christ. Though surrounded with outward enjoyments, and settled in families with desirable friends and relations; though we have companions whose society is delightful, and children in whom we see many promising qualifications; though we live by good neighbours, and are generally beloved where known; yet we ought not to take our rest in these things as our portion. We should be so far from resting in them, that we should desire to leave them all, in God's due time. We ought to possess, enjoy, and use them, with no other view but readily to quit them, whenever we are called to it, and to change them willingly and cheerfully for heaven.

A traveller is not wont to rest in what he meets with, however comfortable and pleasing on the road. If he passes through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves; he does not take up his content in these things, but only takes a transient view of them as he goes along. He is not enticed by fine appearances to put off the thought of proceeding. No, but his journey's end is in his mind. If he meets with comfortable accommodations at an inn; he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, that he is but a stranger, and when he has refreshed himself, or tarried for a night, he is for going forward. And it is pleasant to him to think that so much of the way is gone.

So should we desire heaven more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, that they draw

* Matt. vi. 33.

nearer their happiness. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."—Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as that of a man on a journey; that we may as cheerfully part with them whenever God calls. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."*—These things, as only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn; but we should set our *hearts* on heaven, as our inheritance for ever.

2. We ought to seek heaven, by travelling in the way that leads thither. This is a way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other; and part with all those carnal appetites, which as weights will tend to hinder us. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."† However pleasant the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside, if it be any hindrance, or a stumbling-block in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in the way of obedience to all God's commands, even the difficult as well as the easy; denying all our sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh. We should follow Christ; the path he travelled was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him, in meekness and lowliness of heart, obedience and charity, diligence to do good, and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life; an imitation of those who are in heaven, in their holy enjoyments, loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. Even if we *could* go to heaven with the gratification of our lusts, we should prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

3. We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner. Long journeys are attended with toil and fatigue; especially if through a wilderness. Persons, in such a case, expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness. So we should travel in this way of holiness, improving our time and strength, to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land we have to travel through, is a wilderness; there are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over, and, therefore, there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. † Heb. xii. 1.

4. Our whole lives ought to be spent in travelling this road. We ought to begin *early*. This should be the *first* concern, when persons become capable of acting. When they first set out in the *world*, they should set out on *this* journey. And we ought to travel on with *assiduity*. It ought to be the work of every day. We should often think of our journey's end; and make it our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it. He who is on a journey, is often thinking of the destined place; and it is his daily care and business to get along; and to improve his time to get towards his journey's end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thoughts; and the immediate entrance or passage to it, *viz.* death, should be present with us. We ought to *persevere* in this way as long as we live. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* Though the road be difficult, and toilsome, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure hardships. Though the journey be long, yet we must not stop short; but hold on till we arrive at the place we seek. Nor should we be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought, and design, should be to press forward till we arrive.

5. We ought to be continually growing in holiness; and, in that respect, coming nearer and nearer to heaven. We should be endeavouring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly; becoming more and more like the inhabitants of heaven, in respect of holiness, and conformity to God; the knowledge of God and Christ; in clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as we come nearer to the beatific vision. We should labour to be continually growing in divine love—that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till they ascend wholly in this flame—in obedience and an heavenly conversation; that we may do the will of God on earth, as the angels do in heaven: in comfort and spiritual joy; in sensible communion with God and Jesus Christ. Our path should be as "the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day."† We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness; after an increase in righteousness. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."‡ The perfection of heaven should be our mark. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."§

* Heb. xii. 1. † Prov. iv. 18. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 2. § Phil. iii. 13, 14.

6. All other concerns of life, ought to be entirely subordinate to this. When a man is on a journey, all the steps he takes are subordinated to the aim of getting to his journey's end. And, if he carries money or provisions with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments, to this affair of travelling to heaven. When any thing we have, becomes a clog and hindrance to us, we should quit it immediately. The use of our worldly enjoyments and possessions, should be with such a view, and in such a manner, as to further us in our way heaven-ward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves, and improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends. And, whatever business we are setting about, whatever design we are engaging in, we should inquire with ourselves, whether this business, or undertaking, will forward us in our way to heaven? And, if not, we should quit our design.

Section II.

Why the Christian's life is a journey or pilgrimage?

1. This world is not our abiding place. Our continuance here is but very short. Man's days on the earth, are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. Neither did God give us these temporal accommodations for that end. If God has given us ample estates, and children, or other pleasant friends, it is with no such design, that we should be furnished here, as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them in a very little time. When we are called to any secular business, or charged with the care of a family, if we improve our lives to any other purpose, than as a journey toward heaven, all our labour will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness; as riches, or sensual pleasures; credit and esteem from men; delight in our children, and the prospect of seeing them well brought up, and well settled, &c.—All these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes, and will put an end to these enjoyments. "The places that have known us, will know us no more:" and "the eye that has seen us, shall see us no more." We must be taken away for ever from all these things; and it is uncertain when: it may be soon after we are put into the possession of them. And then, where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave! "So man lieth down, and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more."*

* Job xiv. 12.

2. The future world was designed to be our settled and everlasting abode. There it was intended that we should be fixed; and there alone is a lasting habitation, and a lasting inheritance. The present state is short and transitory; but our state in the other world, is everlasting. And as we are there at first, so we must be without change. Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so much greater importance than our state here, that all our concerns in this world should be wholly subordinated to it.

3. Heaven is that place alone where our highest end, and highest good is to be obtained. God hath made us for himself. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Therefore, then do we attain to our highest end, when we are brought to God: but that is by being brought to heaven; for that is God's throne, the place of his special presence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world, a very imperfect knowledge of him in the midst of muchdarkness: a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God, but in a very imperfect manner; our service being mingled with sin, which dishonours God.—But when we get to heaven, (if ever that be,) we shall be brought to a perfect union with God, and have more clear views of him. There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remaining sin: for "we shall see him as he is." There we shall serve God perfectly; and glorify him in an exalted manner, even to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly give up ourselves to God: our hearts will be pure and holy offerings, presented in a flame of divine love.

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature; and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.—To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is *infinitely* better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean.—Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives; to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labour for, or set our hearts on any thing else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness?

4. Our present state, and all that belongs to it, is designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world.—This world was made for a place of preparation for another. Man's mortal life was given him, that he might be

prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines, and the rain falls upon us; and the earth yields her increase to us for this end. Civil, ecclesiastical, and family affairs, and all our personal concerns, are designed and ordered in subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. To this therefore they ought to be subordinated by us.

Section III.

Instruction afforded by the consideration, that life is a journey, or pilgrimage, towards heaven.

1. This doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of such dear friends, who, while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes. If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning, when they are got to their journey's end? Death, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is to them a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better than their beginning. "*The day of their death, is better than the day of their birth.*"* While they lived, they desired heaven, and chose it above this world, or any of its enjoyments. For this they earnestly longed, and why should we grieve that they have obtained it?—Now they have got to their Father's house. They find more comfort a thousand times, now they are got home, than they did in their journey. In this world they underwent much labour and toil; it was a wilderness they passed through. There were many difficulties in the way; mountains and rough places. It was laborious and fatiguing to travel the road; and they had many wearisome days and nights: but now they have got to their everlasting rest. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."† They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have surmounted them all.

We are ready to look upon death as their calamity, and to mourn, that those who were so dear to us, should be in the dark grave; that they are there transformed to corruption and worms; taken away from their dear children and enjoyments, &c. as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity; they are in a happy condition, inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy: their mouths are filled with joyful songs, and they drink at rivers

* Eccles. vii. 1. † Rev. xiv. 13.

of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief that they have changed their earthly enjoyments, and the company of mortals, for heaven. Their life here, though in the best circumstances, was attended with much that was adverse and afflictive: but now there is an end to all adversity. "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

It is true, we shall see them no more in this world, yet we ought to consider that we are travelling towards the same place; and why should we break our hearts that they have got there before us? We are following after them, and hope, as soon as we get to our journey's end, to be with them again, in better circumstances. A degree of mourning for near relations when departed is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to it; for as long as we are flesh and blood, we have animal propensities and affections. But we have just reason that our mourning should be mingled with joy. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope:"† (*i. e.*) that they should not sorrow as the Heathen, who had no knowledge of a future happiness. This appears by the following verse; "*for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*"

2. If our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven; how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in travelling towards hell?—Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction. They not only draw nearer to hell as to time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction; they are more assimilated to the inhabitants of the infernal world. While others press forward in the straight and narrow way to life, and laboriously travel up the hill toward Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh; these run with a swift career down to eternal death. This is the employment of every day, with all wicked men; and the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew in the way to hell, and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."‡ They hold on it with perseverance. Many of them who live to be old, are never weary in it; though they live to be an hundred years old, they will not cease travelling in the way to hell, till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin:

* Rev. vii. 16, 17. † 1 Thess. iv. 13. ‡ Psalm xlviii. 4.

his powers and faculties are employed in the service of sin; and in fitness for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him as to be subservient to the same purpose. Men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Thus do all unclean persons, who live in lascivious practices in secret; all malicious persons; all profane persons, that neglect the duties of religion. Thus do all unjust persons; and those who are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers; all covetous persons, that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavern-haunters, and frequenters of evil company; and many other kinds that might be mentioned. Thus the bulk of mankind are hastening onward in the broad way to destruction; which is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going in it with one accord. And they are every day going to hell out of this broad way by thousands. Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, as some mighty river constantly disembogues its water into the ocean.

3. Hence when persons are converted they do but begin their work, and set out in the way they have to go.—They never till then do any thing at that work in which their whole lives ought to be spent. Persons before conversion never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ; and so far is he from having done his work, that his care and labour in his Christian work and business, is then but begun, in which he must spend the remaining part of his life.

Those persons do ill, who when they are converted, and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious, as watchful and careful as ever; yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just excuse, that now they have obtained conversion. Should not we be as diligent that we may serve and glorify God, as that we ourselves may be happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet we ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small degree that is behind. The apostle tells us, that he forgot what was behind, and reached forth towards what was before.*

Yea, those who are converted, have now a further reason to strive for grace; for they have seen something of its excellency. A man who has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press towards it than he had before. And they who are converted, should strive to "make their calling and election sure." All those who are converted are not sure of it: and

* Phil. iii. 13.

those who are sure, do not know that they shall be always so; and still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.

Section IV.

An exhortation, so to spend the present life, that it may only be a journey towards heaven.

Labour to obtain such a disposition of mind that you may choose heaven for your inheritance and home; and may earnestly long for it, and be willing to change this world, and all its enjoyments, for heaven. Labour to have your heart taken up so much about heaven, and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends and comforts for heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven; *viz.* in holiness, self-denial, mortification, obedience to all the commands of God, following Christ's example; in a way of a heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels in heaven. Let it be your daily work, from morning till night, and hold out in it to the end; let nothing stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. And let all other concerns be subordinated to this. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life; that this world is not your abiding place, that the future world is to be your everlasting abode; and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world, are given entirely in order to another. And consider further for motive,

1. How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it.—To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your journey, than to obtain heaven? You are placed in this world, with a choice given you, that you may travel which way you please; and one way leads to heaven. Now can you direct your course better than this way? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things; they spend their days in such pursuits. But is not heaven, where is fullness of joy for ever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength, use your means, and spend your days, than in travelling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God; to his glorious presence; to the new Jerusalem; to the heavenly mount Zion; where all your desires will be filled, and no danger of ever loosing your happiness?—No man is at home in this world, whether he choose heaven or not; here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven?

2. This is the way to have death comfortable to us.—To spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, is the way to be free from bondage, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveller think of his journey's end with fear and terror? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Were the children of Israel sorry, after forty years' travel in the wilderness, when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveller, when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provisions that he had to sustain him by the way?

3. No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner.—If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, that all of your life that has been spent otherwise, is lost. You will then see the vanity of all other aims that you may have proposed to yourself. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed, will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think also that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

4. Consider that those who are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven, may have heaven.—Heaven, however high and glorious, is attainable for such poor worthless creatures as we are. We may attain that glorious region which is the habitation of angels; yea, the dwelling-place of the Son of God; and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely; without money and without price; if we are but willing to travel the road that leads to it, and bend our course that way as long as we live; we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

5. Let it be considered, that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell. All mankind, after they have been here a short while, go to either of the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world; the one is *heaven*, whither a small number, in comparison, travel; and the other is *hell*, whither the bulk of mankind throng. And one or the other of these must be the issue of our course in this world.

I shall conclude by giving a few *directions:*

1. Labour to get a sense of the vanity of this world; on account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here: its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, *viz.* on a death-bed.—All men, that live any considerable time in the world, might see enough to convince them of its vanity, if they would but consider.—Be persuaded therefore to exercise consideration, when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labour to turn

your thoughts this way. See the vanity of the world in such a glass.

2. Labour to be much acquainted with heaven.—If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of its worth, nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have your hearts loose from these things, and to use them only in subordination to something else, and be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good.—Labour therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world, to get a firm belief of its reality, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.

3. Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ.—Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth, and the life.* He tells that he is the door of the sheep. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and go in and out and find pasture."† If we therefore would improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him, and not by our own righteousness; as expecting to obtain it only for his sake, looking to him, having our dependence on him, who has procured it for us by his merit. And expect strength to walk in holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.

4. Let Christians help one another in going this journey. —There are many ways whereby Christians might greatly forward one another in their way to heaven, as by religious conference, &c. Therefore let them be exhorted to go this journey as it were in company, conversing together, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as this.—Let them go united, and not fall out by the way, which would be to hinder one another; but use all means they can to help each other up the hill.—This would ensure a more successful travelling, and a more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.

* John xiv. 6. † John x. 9.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE READER RESPECTING THE FIRST SERMON.

It was with no small difficulty that the author's youth and modesty were prevailed on to let him appear a preacher in our public lecture, and afterward to give us a copy of his discourse, at the desire of divers ministers and others who heard it. But as we quickly found him a workman that needs not to be ashamed before his brethren, our satisfaction was the greater to see him pitching upon so noble a subject, and treating it with so much strength and clearness, as the judicious reader will perceive in the following composure: a subject which secures to God his great design in the work of fallen man's redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, which is evidently so laid out, as that the glory of the whole should return to him, the blessed ordainer, purchaser, and applier; a subject which enters deep into practical religion; without the belief of which, that must soon die in the hearts and lives of men.

For in proportion to the sense we have of our dependence on the sovereign God for all the good we want, will be our value for him, our application to him, our trust in him, our fear to offend him, and our care to please him; as likewise our gratitude and love, our delight and praise, upon our sensible experience of his free benefits.

In short, it is the very soul of piety, to apprehend and own that all our springs are in him; the springs of our present grace and comfort, and of our future glory and blessedness; and that they all entirely flow through Christ, by the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit. By these things saints live, and in all these things is the life of our spirits.

Such doctrines as these, which, by humbling the minds of men, prepare them for the exaltations of God, he has signally owned and prospered in the reformed world, and in our land especially in the days of our forefathers; and we hope they will never grow unfashionable among us: for, we are well assured, if those which we call the doctrines of grace ever come to be contemned or disrelished, vital piety will proportionably languish and wear away; as these doctrines always sink in the esteem of men upon the decay of serious religion.

We cannot therefore but express our joy and thankfulness, that the great Head of the church is pleased still to raise up from among the children of his people, for the supply of his churches, those who assert and maintain these evangelical principles, and that our churches (notwithstanding all their degeneracies) have still a high value for such principles, and for those who publicly own and teach them.

And as we cannot but wish and pray that the college in the neighbouring colony (as well as our own) may be a fruitful mother of many such sons as the author, by the blessing of Heaven on the care of their present worthy rector; so we heartily rejoice in the special favour of Providence in bestowing such a rich gift on the happy church of Northampton, which has for so many lustres of years flourished under the influence of such pious doctrines, taught them in the excellent ministry of their late venerable pastor, whose gift and spirit, we hope, will long live and shine in this his grandson, to the end that they may abound yet more in all the lovely fruits of evangelical humility and thankfulness, to the glory of God.

To his blessing we commit them all, with this discourse, and every one that reads it; and are

Your Servants in the Gospel,

T. PRINCE.

W. COOPER.

Boston, August 17, 1731.

SERMON VI.*

GOD GLORIFIED IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE.

1 Cor. i. 29—31.

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Those Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle, dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22d verse of this chapter, "The Greeks seek after wisdom." Corinth was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world. The apostle therefore observes to them how God by the gospel destroyed, and brought to nought, their wisdom. The learned Grecians and their great philosophers, by all their wisdom did not know God, they were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But, after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He "chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are." And the apostle informs them in the text why he thus did, *That no flesh should glory in his presence*, &c. In which words may be observed,

1. What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, *viz.* that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God; *That no flesh should glory in his presence,—that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

* Preached on the public lecture in Boston, July 8, 1731; and published at the desire of several ministers and others in Boston who heard it.—This was the first piece published by Mr. Edwards.

2. How this end is attained in the work of redemption, *viz.* by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work, for all their good. Inasmuch as,

First, All the good that they have is in and through Christ: He *is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. *He is made of God unto us wisdom:* In him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world; it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have *righteousness:* It is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favour. It is by Christ that we have *sanctification:* We have in him true excellency of heart, as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have *redemption*, or the actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

Secondly, Another instance wherein our dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, That it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him: he *of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness*, &c.

Thirdly, It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shown our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for it is *of him that we are in Christ Jesus;* it is the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him, and close with him.

DOCTRINE.

"God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him."——Here I propose to show, 1st, That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And 2dly, That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.

I. There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: They are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, *viz.* That they have all their good of him, and that they have all through him, and that they have all in him: That he is the *cause* and original whence all their good comes, therein it is *of* him; and that he is the *medium* by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it *through* him; and that he is the *good itself* given and conveyed, therein it is *in* him. Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

First, The redeemed have all their good *of* God. God is the great *author* of it. He is the *first* cause of it; and not only so, but he is the *only* proper cause. It is of God that we have our Redeemer. It is God that has provided a Saviour for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only begotten Son of God, but he is from God, as we are concerned in him, and in his office of Mediator. He is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world. And as it is God that *gives*, so it is God that *accepts* the Saviour. He gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

It is of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him and are united to him. It is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him. Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is of God that we actually receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. It is God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell; and into his favour the redeemed are received, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed receive all their true excellency, wisdom, and holiness: and that two ways, *viz.* as the Holy Ghost by whom these things are immediately wrought is from God, proceeds from him, and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling the knowledge of God and divine things, a holy disposition and all grace, are conferred and upheld. And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet it is of God that we have these means of grace, and it is he that makes them effectual. It is of God that we have the holy scriptures: they are his word. It is of God that we

have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of his Spirit. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him.—2 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.

1. The redeemed have all from the *grace* of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the excellency of what is given. The gift was infinitely precious, because it was of a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was of a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him. The benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal misery, and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expense of the method and means by which a way is made for our having the gift. He gave him to dwell amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; and in the like though sinless infirmities. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but as slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow. He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God who saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it.—And it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness by which they are distinguished. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on free goodness of God for much more than he did then. Then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience; for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward. But now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more; we stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward of righteousness; and so we do now: But we stand

in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; to pardon our sin, and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for holiness. We had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, for it became God to create holy all his reasonable creatures. It would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when fallen man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace: God may for ever deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state, than it was before we were either sinful or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and afterward holy. So the production of the effect is sensible, and its derivation from God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favour of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure, and afterward are received into favour. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable, and afterward happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature-excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterward enriched with all good.

2. We receive all from the *power* of God. Man's redemption is often spoken of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state from the depths of sin and misery, to such an exalted state of holiness and happiness. Eph. i. 19. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."—

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature. It is a work of creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. "We are created in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii 10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again, Eph. iv. 24. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is a raising from the dead, Colos. ii. 12, 13. "Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being, and spiritual life which is produced in the work of conversion, is a far greater and more glorious effect, than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made—a death in sin, a total corruption of nature, and depth of misery—is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or non-entity.

It is by God's power also that we are preserved in a state of grace. 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or at sun-rising.—Men are dependent on the power of God for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on that work in the heart, for subduing sin and corruption, increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works. Man is dependent on divine power in bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ's glorious likeness, and filling of it with a satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be suitable for a habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God, that are seen in the series of God's acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God's power to do more things for him, and depends on a more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first; but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. It is a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved, and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out

of the hands of the devil, and from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no prepossession or opposition. Luke xi. 21, 22. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." So it is a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had nothing in man.—Thus we have shown how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all of him.

Secondly, They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all *through* him. God is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All we have, wisdom, the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance into God's favour, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, is from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God; which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon, as he through whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator; but he the Mediator is God.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea, God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. vii. 27. "He offered up himself." And chap. ix. 26. "He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price.

As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on him in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man was to have eternal life then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it: and though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so *immediately* on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness

of Christ: he *is made unto us righteousness;* and therefore is prophesied of, Jer. xxiii. 6, under that name, "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God. 2 Cor v. 21. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—Thus in redemption we have not only all things of God, but by and through him, 1 Cor. viii. 6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Thirdly, The redeemed have all their good *in God*. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good.—The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good, I mean that extrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or, which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

1. The redeemed have all their *objective* good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling-place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honour and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life" that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will for ever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another: but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever, that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them.

2. The redeemed have all their *inherent* good in God. Inherent good is two-fold; it is either excellency or pleasure. These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him. They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency. God puts his own beauty, *i. e.* his beautiful likeness, upon their souls. They are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, 2 Pet. i. 4. They are holy by being made partakers

of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in him as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul. He, acting in, upon, and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself. John iv. 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Compared with chap. vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The sum of what Christ has purchased for us, is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the sum of the blessings, which the redeemed shall receive in heaven, is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, Rev. xxii. 1. which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water, explained John vii. 38, 39. which is elsewhere called the "river of God's pleasures." Herein consists the fulness of good, which the saints receive of Christ. It is by partaking of the Holy Spirit, that they have communion with Christ in his fulness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him; and they do receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints' inheritance; and therefore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, 2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts." And chap. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And Eph. i 13, 14. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things. Matt. vii. 11. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" In Luke it is, chap. xi. 13. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to

procure, and the subject of gospel-promises. Gal. iii. 13, 14. "He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father. Luke xxiv. 49. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." The Spirit of God therefore is called "the Spirit of promise;" Eph. i. 33. This promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed; Acts ii. 13. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear." So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is in God. It is in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness are in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus God has given us the Redeemer, and it is by him that our good is purchased. So God is the Redeemer and the price; and he also is the good purchased. So that all that we have is of God, and through him, and in him. Rom. xi. 36. "For of him, and through him, and to him, (or in him,) are all things." The same in the Greek that is here rendered *to him*, is rendered *in him*, 1 Cor. viii. 6.

II. God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, *viz.* By there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

1. Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to notice and acknowledge God's perfections and all-sufficiency. The greater the creature's dependence is on God's perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion he has to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with and dependence upon the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, *viz.* dependence, does especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, it is easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so

great dependence on God, and his perfections and in so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God demonstrates his all-sufficiency. So much as the dependence of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself appear; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fulness of the being be who supplies him. Our having all *of* God, shows the fulness of his power and grace; our having all through him, shows the fulness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all in him, demonstrates his fulness of beauty, love, and happiness. And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, have not only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fulness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be, if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory which we absolutely, immediately, and universally depend upon!

2. Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's.—By the creature being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing, and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom, and holiness, are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature in any respects sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honour and profound respect may belong to God from those that are at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. It is certainly what God aims at in the disposition of things in redemption, (if we allow the scriptures to be a revelation of God's mind,) that God should appear full, and man in himself empty, that God should appear all, and man nothing. It is God's declared design that others should not "glory in his presence;" which implies that it is his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man "glories in God's presence," so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

3. By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have

so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, man's respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves, or some other being, for another part: Or, if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself and him from whom, and him through whom we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom, and is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God, all unites in him as the centre.

USE.

1. We may here observe the marvellous wisdom of God, in the work of redemption. God hath made man's emptiness and misery, his low, lost and ruined state, into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and wo into which he has fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honour, and to a high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere, and most absolute, and divine dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: There is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: All is of the Father, all through the Son, and all in the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as all in all. It is fit that he who is, and there is none else, should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all and the only, in this work.

2. Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, derogate from his glory, and thwart the design of our redemption. And such are those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the mentioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption. How-

ever they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet they deny a dependence that is so *absolute* and universal. They own an entire dependence on God for *some* things, but not for others; they own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an *interest* in the Redeemer. They own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for *conversion*, and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits. They own a dependence on God for *means* of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; a partial dependence on the power of God, for obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign grace of God. They own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favour, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency. They own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves, as it was under the first covenant. Now whatever scheme is inconsistent with our *entire* dependence on God for all, and of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts its lustre and glory.

3. Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith, a sensible acknowledgment of *absolute dependence* on God in this affair. It is very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge their dependence on God for it. It is by this means that God hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and it is fit that he should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it.—Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God; it gives all the glory of redemption to him alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, be sensible that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: He that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child, Mark x. 15. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein." It is the delight of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone:

that is the language of it, Psalm cxv. 1. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

4. Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavour to obtain, and increase in, a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye on him alone, to mortify a self-dependent, and self-righteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to exalt himself, and depend on his own power or goodness; as though from himself he must expect happiness. He is prone to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found.—But this doctrine should teach us to exalt God *alone;* as by trust and reliance, so by praise. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Hath any man hope that he is converted, and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty? that his sins are forgiven, and he received into God's favour, and exalted to the honour and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life? let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the most miserable of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life? let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself, to reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favour, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness, and abundant in good works? let him take nothing of the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to him whose "workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

SERMON VII.*

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD.

DEUT. XXXII. 35.

—Their foot shall slide in due time.—

IN this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people, and who lived under the means of grace; but who, notwithstanding all God's wonderful works towards them, remained (as ver. 28.) void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text.—The expression I have chosen for my text, *Their foot shall slide in due time*, seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

1. That they were always exposed to *destruction;* as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii. 18. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies, that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning: Which is also expressed in Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction: How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

* Preached at Enfield, July 8, 1741, at a time of great awakenings; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers.

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall *of themselves*, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time comes, *their foot shall slide*. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands on such slippery declining ground, on the edge of a pit, he cannot stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this.—"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God"—By the *mere* pleasure of God, I mean his *sovereign* pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.—The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of *power* in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands.—He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, who has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence from the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by: thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?

2. They *deserve* to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their

sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii. 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of *condemnation* to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is, John viii. 23. "Ye are from beneath:" And thither he is bound; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same *anger* and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth: yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

5. The *devil* stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his goods, Luke xi. 12. The devils watch them; they are ever by them at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand, by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish *principles* reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isa. lvii. 20. For the present, God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, " Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further ;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul ; it is destructive in its nature ; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is immoderate and boundless in its fury ; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature ; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows this is no evidence, that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day ; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expence of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going

out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it does not depend at all the less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. To this, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world, and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death: but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii. 16. "How dieth the wise man? even as the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and *contrivance* which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive: it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of that misery: we doutless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself: I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief: Death outwitted me: God's wrath was too

quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying, Peace and safety, then suddenly destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under *no obligation*, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire bent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION.

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ.—That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of: there is nothing between you and hell but the

air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a fallen rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean

time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night: that you was suffered to awake again in this world.

after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.—And consider here more particularly,

1. *Whose* wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov. xx. 2. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: Whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. It is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke xii. 4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

2. It is the *fierceness* of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah lix. 18. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries." So Isaiah lxvi. 15. "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." And in many other places. So, Rev. xix. 15. we read of "the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is "the fierceness and wrath of God." The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "the fierceness and wrath of *Almighty* God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies, that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall *not suffer beyond what strict justice requires.* Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek. viii. 18. "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare. God will have no other use to put you to, but to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no

other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but to be filled full of wrath. God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only "laugh and mock," Prov. i. 25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isa. lxiii. 3, which are the words of the great God. "I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, *viz.* contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favour, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you, in the utmost contempt: no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The *misery* you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it. But the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his

indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa. xxxiii. 12—14. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," &c.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa. lxvi. 23, 24. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is *everlasting* wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider

it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest will be there in a little time! your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair; but here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor damned hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls

as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield,[1] where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived long in the world, and are not to this day born again? and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God.—And you, young men, and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.—And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favours to some, will doubtless be a day of its remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts hardon, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls; and never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of which persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days; the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally cause this day, and will cause the day that ever you was born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you

[1] Lower in the neighbourhood.

had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation: Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."

SERMON VIII.*

THE

WATCHMAN'S DUTY AND ACCOUNT.

HEB. xiii. 17.

They watch for your souls, as they that must give account.

AFTER the Apostle had in this epistle particularly and largely insisted on the great doctrines of the gospel relating to the person, priesthood, sacrifice, exaltation and intercession of Christ, and the nature, privileges and benefits of the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, as answering to the types of the Old Testament; He improves all in the latter part of the epistle to enforce christian duties and holy practice, as his manner is in most of his epistles. And after he had recommended other duties to the christian *Hebrews*, in this verse he gives them counsel with regard to their duty towards those that were set over them in ecclesiastical authority; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.*—By *them that had the rule over them*, the Apostle means their ecclesiastical rulers, and particularly their ministers and pastors that preached the word of God to them; as is evident by verse 7. *Remember* them that have the rule over you, *who have spoken unto you the word of God:* and also by the words of the text, that immediately follow in the same verse, in which the employment of those that have the rule over them, that they are to obey and submit to, is represented. Concerning which may be observed,

1. What it was their pastors were conversant about, in the employment they were charged with, *viz.* the souls of men. The employments that many others were engaged in were about the bodies of men; so it is with almost all the particular callings that mankind do follow; they are in one respect or other to provide for men's bodies, or to furthur their temporal

* Preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. Jonathan Judd, to the Pastoral Office over the Church of Christ, in the New Precinct at Northampton, June 8, 1743.

interests; as the business of husbandmen, sailors, merchants, physicians, attorneys, and civil officers and rulers, and the innumerable trades and mechanical arts that are practised and pursued by the children of men: but the work of the ministry is about the soul, that part of man that is immortal, and made and designed for a state of inconceivable blessedness, or extreme and unutterable torments throughout all eternity, and therefore infinitely precious; and is that part of man in which the great distinction lies between man and all the other innumerable kinds of creatures in this lower world, and by which he is vastly dignified above them; it is such beings as these that the work of the ministry is immediately conversant about.

2. How ministers in the business they have to attend are to be employed about men's souls, they are to *watch for them;* which implies that they are committed to their care to keep, that they may be so taken care of that they may not be lost, but eternally saved.

3. A grand argument to induce and oblige them to faithfulness in this employment, *they must give account; i. e.* they must give an account to him that committed those souls to their care, of the souls they were betrusted with, and of the care they have taken of them.

Therefore that we may the better understand the nature of that work of a *minister of the gospel* and *pastor* of a church, and the grand inducement to faithfulness in it, spoken of in the text, and know the better what improvement we ought to make of these things, I would

I. Show that ministers of the gospel have the souls of men committed to their care by the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. I would show to what purpose Christ thus commits the precious souls of men to the care of ministers.

III. That the way in which Christ expects that ministers should seek that these purposes may be obtained, with respect to the souls committed to them, is by watching for them.

IV. I would observe, how when the time of their employment is at an end, they must give an account to him that committed the care of these souls unto them.

And then make application of the whole.

I. *Ministers of the gospel have the precious and immortal souls of men committed to their care and trust by the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The souls of men are his; he is the creator of them: God created all things by Jesus Christ. He created not only the material world, but also those things that are immaterial and invisible, as angels and the souls of men. Col. i. 16. *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in*

earth, visible and invisible; *whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him.*

God is the creator of men in both soul and body; but their souls are in a special and more immediate manner his workmanship, wherein less use is made of second causes, instruments or means, or any thing pre-existent. The bodies of men, though they are indeed God's work, yet they are formed by him in a way of propagation from their natural parents, and the substance of which they are constituted is matter that was pre-existent; but the souls of men are by God's immediate creation and infusion, being in no part communicated from earthly parents, nor formed out of any matter or principles existing before. The Apostle observes the difference, and speaks of earthly fathers as being *fathers of our flesh*, or our *bodies* only, but of God as being the *father of our spirits.* Heb. xii. 9. *Furthermore we have had* fathers of our flesh, *which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to* the Father of spirits *and live?* Therefore God is once and again called *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, Numb. xvi. 22. and chap. xxvii. 16. And in Eccl xii. 7. God is represented as having immediately given or implanted the *soul*, as in that respect differing from the *body*, that is of pre-existent matter; *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* And it is mentioned in Zech. xii. 1. as one of God's glorious prerogatives, that he is *he that formeth the spirit of man within him.* And indeed the soul of man is by far the greatest and most glorious piece of divine workmanship, of all the creatures on this lower creation. And therefore it was the more meet that, however second causes should be improved, in the production of meaner creatures; yet this, which is the chief and most noble of all, and the crown and end of all the rest, should be reserved to be the more immediate work of God's own hands, and display of his power, and to be communicated directly from him, without the intervention of instruments, of honouring second causes so much as to improve them in bringing to pass so noble an effect. It is observable that even in the first creation of man, when his body was formed immediately by God, not in a course of nature, or in the way of natural propagation; yet the soul is represented as being in a higher, more direct and immediate manner from God, and so communicated that God did therein as it were communicate something of himself: *The Lord God formed man* (i. e. his body) *of the dust of the ground*, (a mean and vile original) *and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;* (whereby something was communicated from an infinitely higher source, even God's own living spirit or divine vital fullness) *and* so *man became a living soul.*

The souls of men being thus in a special manner from God, God is represented as having a special propriety in them, Ezek. xviii. 4. *Behold all souls are mine: As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine.*

And as the souls of men are more directly from God, by the more special and immediate exercise of his divine power as a creator, and are what he challenges as his by a special propriety, and are the most noble part of the lower creation, and are infinitely distinguished from all other creatures here below in that they are immortal beings; so they are, above all other creatures which God hath made in this world, the subjects of God's care and special providence.

Divines are wont to distinguish between God's common and special providence. His common providence is that which he exercises towards all his creatures, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, in preserving them, and disposing of them by his mighty power, and according to his sovereign pleasure. His special providence is that which he exercises towards his intelligent rational creatures, as moral agents: of which sort are mankind alone, of all the innumerable kinds of creatures in this lower world: and in a special manner the souls of men; for in them only is immediately seated reason and intelligence, and a capacity of moral agency; and therefore they in a peculiar manner are the subjects of God's special providence that he exercises in this lower world. And it is to be observed that God's common providence is subordinated to his special providence; and all things in this world are governed and disposed of in subordination to the great ends God has to obtain with respect to the souls of men. And it is further to be observed, that as the creation of the world was committed to the Son of God by the Father, so is the government of it; and in a peculiar manner the affairs of God's special providence, are left in his hands; and so the souls of men, that are the peculiar subjects of his special providence, are committed to his care; and more especially such souls as are of Christ's visible kingdom or church, which is often in the scripture represented as the field and vineyard that he is the owner of, and has taken the care of.—And what Christ's value is for men's souls appears by what he has done and suffered for them.

But these souls that Christ has made, and that are committed into his hands of the Father, and that are so precious in his account, he commits to the care of ministers. There is a certain order of men that are so dignified and honoured by him, as to have so great a trust reposed in them. He, as it were, brings those souls as an infinitely precious treasure, and commits them to them to take care of; as a prince commits his treasure, his jewels, and most precious things into the hands of one of the dignified servants of his household; or as the father

of a family, when he goes a journey into a far country, leaves his family to the care of a steward.

I come now in the

2d place, to inquire *to what purpose Christ commits the precious souls of men to the care of ministers.*

I answer in two things,

1. He commits men's souls to ministers to keep and take care of them for him, that by their means they may answer their end in glorifying him. God has made all things for himself, he has created them for his glory; but more especially those creatures that he has endued with understanding, as he has done the souls of men: it is by them that God has his glory from all his creatures, as they are the eye of the creation to behold the glory of God manifested in the other creatures, and the mouth of the creation to praise him and ascribe to him the glory that is displayed in them. The other creatures glorify God passively and eventually, as God glorifies himself in them, as they are the subjects of the exercise of his power and wisdom in their creation and preservation, and in those events that are brought to pass in his disposal of them. Thus God glorifies himself in his works that are manifest in the irrational and inanimate creation, in the view of his rational creatures that he has made capable of beholding and admiring them, and adoring, loving and praising him for them: But they only are capable of glorifying him actively and immediately; therefore all the other creatures do, as it were, bring their tribute of glory to them, through their hands, to be offered to their Creator. And therefore the souls of men are beings that, with regard to the glory of God, the great end of all things, are of immensely greater importance than all other creatures in this lower world. But these, with respect to this their great end, are committed to the care and keeping of ministers; and therefore Christ has furnished them with proper means to bring them to this end; he has given them all needful instructions; they have a perfect rule and directory to guide them in this great affair; and has enjoined them the duties they are to perform in their office in every particular, and the manner in which they are to perform these duties, in the charge which he has left them; and has furnished them with all needful helps for the instruction of those souls that are committed to them, to lead them to answer their great end, in duly glorifying their Creator; and all proper means for the exciting and engaging them to attend to, and follow those instructions, as also means for their help and assistance in it, that they may do it the more easily and effectually.

2. They are committed to their care and keeping that they may not be eternally lost, but may have everlasting life. These souls, as I observed before, are immortal and made for eternity;

they are set in this world between two opposite eternal states, the one a state of exceeding and eternal glory and blessedness, the other a state of unutterable and unalterable misery: and as they are by nature they are liable to either; by their original guilt and corruption they are exposed to perish forever, in total and perfect destruction and misery: but Christ, from his knowledge of the infinite worth of souls, and his great compassion and love to them, has, by his own precious blood, made way for their escape, and at this infinite expense, has procured unspeakable exaltation and perfect blessedness for them in heaven to all eternity; which by this means they have opportunity to obtain. But yet it remains uncertain what will become of them, until Christ's redemption be applied to them, or they are actually cast into hell; there is an opportunity given, a time of probation, until the great and unalterable event shall determine one way or the other. In the mean time there is a space for the use of means, and the exercise of care, prudence and diligence for our own souls and the souls of others; that they may not fail of the grace of God, but may escape that infinitely dreadful destruction that they are naturally in danger of, and may indeed obtain that infinite privilege of eternal life, that is offered through the purchase of Jesus Christ. And now in this grand affair, and to this great purpose of an escape from eternal misery, and the obtaining everlasting glory, Christ has committed the precious souls of men to the care of ministers; that by their means they may have the benefit of his redemption, and might obtain that which he has suffered so much to procure. Christ knew that notwithstanding all that he had done to procure life for souls, they would need much care to be taken of them, and many means to be used with them, in order to their being indeed preserved from eternally perishing, and actually brought to the possession of life: and therefore he has appointed a certain order of men, whose whole business it might be to take care of immortal souls; and into their hands has committed these souls, and has betrusted them with the ordinances of his house, and means that he has provided for their salvation; that nothing might be wanting that they need for their furniture for this great business; he has as it were committed to them his goods, and has given them in some respects the keys of his stores and treasury; to them are committed the oracles of God and treasure of the gospel. 2. Cor. iv. 7. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels.* And Chap. v. 18. 19. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed to us the work of reconciliation.*

And as the word of God, so the sacraments that he has appointed, and the discipline of his house, he has committed to them, to be administered by them ; and has subjected the souls themselves that they have the care of to them, as far as is necessary to put them under the greatest advantage effectually to care for their salvation, and has left a charge to their people to obey them and submit themselves, as in the verse of my text.

I now proceed

III. To observe, *that the way in which he who has committed souls to ministers, expects they should seek that these purposes may be obtained with respect to them, is by watching for them.*

Though great things have been done by Christ to make way for the salvation of those precious souls, and although Christ has furnished ministers with all proper means to keep them; yet they are in such circumstances in this world, that there is need of the exercise of great watchfulness, and the utmost care and diligence, in those that have the care of them, to prevent their being lost: for they are in the midst of snares, and encompassed round with dangers on every side ; they are in the enemy's country, where there are multitudes every where that are strong and subtil, and exceeding blood-thirsty and cruel, that are indefatigably, day and night, seeking the destruction of these souls.

If a prince should commit some great treasure, consisting of most precious jewels, to the care of a subject, to keep for him, and carry through an enemy's country, and bring home safe to his palace, and knew that the enemies by the way would be sensible that the treasure was committed to him, and would be aware of the great value of it, and therefore would be exceeding greedy of it, and incessant in their endeavours to get it from him ; would not the prince expect that he, with whom he had entrusted this treasure, should use great care in keeping it? Would he be esteemed faithful to his trust, in the care of so great a treasure, and in such circumstances, without keeping up a continual watch? They that have the care of a city in time of war, and especially at a time when the city is encompassed by enemies that lay siege to it, are wont, if faithful, to maintain incessant vigilance to defend it: the watchmen of the city in such a case had need to watch strictly, for they have the care of the lives of men.—Ministers are from time to time represented in Scripture as the watchmen that have the care of the city of God ; as Cant. iii. 3. and v. 7. Isai. lii. 8. and lxii. 6. and in other places. These watchmen have not only the care of the lives of men's bodies, but of their souls, which are infinitely more precious. It is expected of them that they should behave themselves as those that both kept and built the city of *Jerusalem*, in *Nehemiah's* time,

while they were continually observed by malicious and subtil enemies, that diligently sought by all means to circumvent them, and to destroy the city and people; who with one hand wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; holding spears from the rising of the morning until the stars appeared; and had a trumpet always at hand to sound, to give warning of any appearing danger, and did not put off their clothes, nor lay up their weapons, day nor night, Neh. iv. from the 16 verse to the end.

Ministers are appointed to be shepherds over Christ's flock; and he commits his flock to their care to keep them, and lead them through a great and howling wilderness, full of hungry wolves and roaring lions. And is there not need of a strict and constant watch in the shepherds in such a case, as they would preserve the lives of the sheep, and lead them to the land of their rest?

I come now to,

IV. The last thing in the doctrinal handling of the text, *viz. That ministers hereafter must give account to him that committed men's precious souls to their care.*

Christ's committing souls to ministers' care and charge, and betrusting them with them as servants or stewards, necessarily supposes them to be accountable to their master with respect to the charge committed to them.

He that has a treasure committed to him by the owner, and takes the care and charge of it, not as his own possession, but only to improve or keep for an appointed time, for him to whom the proper possession belongs, must return that treasure to the owner when his time is out, and is accountable to him how he has fulfilled that which he undertook; and if any precious jewel be missing, he must give an account of it.—So must ministers give an account of the souls committed to their care.

The office and work of ministers is not to last always; their care of souls is but for a limited season; and when that is expired, they must return to their master to give an account.

After what manner they must be called to an account, may be shown in these two things,

1. The event of things with regard to the souls committed to them will be inquired into. As there are so many precious souls committed to their care by Christ, so hereafter it will be inquired what is become of those souls. As if a person has a number of precious jewels committed to him to keep; when the time of his betrustment is out, and he comes to return the instrusted treasure, the state of it will be examined, that it may be seen whether any jewel be lacking or not; and if any be missing, an account must be given what is become of it. The charge of a minister is in scripture represented by that of a

steward, to whom the householder, when going into a far country commits his goods, and when he returns, expects that the steward should give an account of his stewardship. In such a case the householder looks into the state of his goods that he left behind under the steward's care. The master in the parable, Matt. xxv. 14, &c. when he returns from his journey, has his goods, that he committed to the care of his servants, brought forth and laid before him.

2. It will be inquired how far the event that shall be found, with regard to souls committed to them, was owing to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in that care and watch that was appointed them. If any precious soul be found lacking, it will be inquired how this comes to pass: they must give an account what they have done with this and that soul that is missing, whether they were lost through their neglect or no; they must give an account what care they have taken, and what diligence they have used, and whether or no they can wash their hands from guilt with respect to them: it shall be examined by an eye that is as a flame of fire, whether the blood of the souls that are lost is not indeed to be found in their skirts.—We find in the parable of the great supper, that the servants that are sent out to invite guests, return from time to time to their master to give him an account both of the event in their success with respect to some that they were sent to, and unsuccessfulness with regard to others; and also of their own doings and faithfulness, whereby they are clear of the guilt of their unsuccessfulness, and are commended to the gracious reward of their success. Luke xiv. 20, 21. I now come to the

APPLICATION.

In which I shall only address myself to those who are principally concerned in the great and solemn affair of this day, *viz.* to him who is now solemnly to be set apart to the work of the ministry in this place, and to those whose souls are to be committed to his care.

1. I would apply myself to you, *dear sir*, to whose care the great Redeemer and Head of the church is this day committing a number of precious souls in this place. I beseech you now to suffer the word of exhortation on this solemn occasion; suffer me to put you in mind how great the person is, with whom you are immediately and chiefly concerned in the affair of this day; even the great Shepherd of the sheep, and glorious Lord of heaven and earth, who is to be your and our judge. You present yourself this day before him to receive at his hands a sacred *depositum*, a great treasure, a number of souls that are to exist throughout all eternity, each one of which is infinitely more precious than all the precious gems that the earth affords. And I beseech you to consider to how great a purpose he is

about to commit them to your care and keeping; it is that they, by means of your faithful care and watchfulness, may be saved with an everlasting salvation. You may judge how much Christ will insist upon it that you should exercise great diligence and strictness in the care you take of them, by the value he himself has manifested of the souls of men, by what he has done and suffered for them: he has shown how precious he has judged immortal souls to be, in that he, though a person of infinite glory, did not think his own blood, his life, his soul, too precious to be offered up as a price for them to redeem them, that they might obtain that salvation in order to which he now is about to commit a number of them to your care, and to betrust you with the means that he has provided for that end; committing to you his holy oracles, and the food of his house, which is his own body and blood, that therewith you might feed these souls; and in some sense committing to you the keys of his stores and treasures, that you might supply and enrich them, and be a means of their eternal wealth and glory.

Consider, *dear sir*, how great an honour he does you whom God the Father hath made head of the whole universe, and Lord of all things to the church; that after he has provided for the salvation of souls by his dying pains and precious blood, and the Father has committed to him all power in heaven and earth, that he might actually bestow eternal life on them that he died for; he should call you to be a co-worker with him, and should commit precious souls to your care, that you might be the instrument of bringing them home to him, and bringing that to pass with respect to them, for which his soul travailed in the agonies of death, and in ineffable conflicts with the dreadful wrath of God. You are now about to receive the precious treasure at his hands, which you are to keep for him: you present yourself here before the Lord for this end, that you may as it were reach forth your hand and take this great *depositum* with solemn vow diligently and faithfully to keep it, and devote yourself to that service; so that if it be possible for you to prevent it, no one of those infinitely precious jewels may be lost, but that you may return them all safe to him from whose hands you receive them.

Consider the example of your glorious Lord and master. There was a number of the souls of men committed by the father into his hands, that he might take care for their salvation. And after what manner did he execute his office? How did he lay out himself for the salvation of those souls? What great things did he do? And what great things did he suffer? How hard was the labour he went through? And how greatly did he deny himself? How did this great shepherd of the sheep behave himself when he saw the wolf coming to destroy

the sheep; he did not flee to save his own life, and so leave the sheep to become a prey; but from pity and love to the sheep, interposed himself between them and their enemy, stood between them and harm, and encountered the wolf, and in the conflict gave his own life to save their's, John x. 11—15.—We read of Christ's travailing for souls, Isai. liii. 10, 11. *It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. —He shall see of* the travail of his soul, *and shall be satisfied.* And how did he travail for this seed of his? Look into the garden of *Gethsemane*, and there behold him lying on the earth, with his body covered over with clotted blood, fallen down in lumps to the ground, with his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and offering up strong crying and tears together with his blood: and look to the cross, where he endured yet far more extreme agonies, and drank up the bitter cup of God's wrath, and shed the remainder of his blood, lingeringly drained out through his tortured hands and feet, and extravated out of his broken heart into his bowels, and there turned into blood and water, through the vehement fermentation occasioned by the weight of grief and extremity of agony of soul, under which he cried out with that loud and lamentable and repeated cry. Thus he travailed in birth with his seed; thus he laboured and suffered for the salvation of those souls that the Father had committed to him. This is the example of the great shepherd. And though it is not required of under-shepherds that they should endure sufferings of such a degree or nature; for Christ has suffered them to that end, that both ministers and people might escape them; yet surely he expects that, as they would approve themselves as his disciples and followers, and co-workers with him in seeking the salvation of the same souls, they should not be backward to go through any labours or sufferings which may be requisite in them, in order to their most effectually promoting the great end of his sufferings, with regard to the souls that he has committed to them.

And as you, *dear sir*, are to stand in Christ's stead towards this people, and to act as his ambassador; should you not show the like spirit, the like love to souls, and imitate him in his readiness to labour and deny yourself and suffer, yea to spend and be spent for them? like the blessed apostle. 2 Cor. xii. 15.

The case with you, *sir*, is as if the head of a family, that was a great prince, with a number of children in a strange land, when going home to receive a kingdom, should leave his children behind him, and commit them to the care of a servant, safely to conduct them through a dangerous wilderness, and bring them home to him; in which case, he has their health and lives committed to his care, as well as their future glory in his kingdom. With what care and watchfulness would it be ex-

pected of a servant that he should execute his office in such a case!" and surely if he fails of being thoroughly careful and watchful, after he has taken upon him so great a charge, and any sad disaster should be the consequence of his unfaithfulness; it will most justly be required of him that he should answer it, and he will inexcusably fall under his master's heaviest displeasure.

And suffer me, *sir*, to put you in mind of the account you must give to your master of these souls he seems this day to be about to commit to you: You are to watch for these souls as one that must give account. If any one of these souls should be missing hereafter, having been lost under your ministry, it will be demanded of you another day, by your great Lord, "What is become of such a soul? Here are not all the souls that I committed to you to bring home to me; there is such an one missing; what is become of it? has it perished through your neglect?" If you are able to say at that time, "Lord, it was not through my neglect; I have done what in me lay for his salvation; I ceased not to warn and counsel and reprove him, and faithfully set before him his danger, and have not forborne to declare thy whole counsel to him; I have not neglected this and other souls that thou didst commit to me, to gratify my sloth, or pursue my worldly interest; I have given myself wholly to this work, labouring therein night and day; I have been ready, Lord, as thou knowest, to sacrifice my own ease and profit, and pleasure, and temporal convenience, and the good will of my neighbours, for the sake of the good of the souls I had the charge of; I have not led this soul into any snare by my ill example; I have neglected no means of thine appointment, either public or private, to turn him from sin to God; I sought out acceptable words, and studied for the most likely means to be used for his saving good; but he would not hearken, but turned a deaf ear; under all was stupid and obstinate, and went on carelessly and frowardly in the imagination of his heart." If you are able to say in like manner as Christ did to the Father, with respect to the souls that were committed to him; *those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition*; you will be able to hold up your head with comfort before your Judge, your account will be accepted, you shall be acquitted, and your unsuccessful faithfulness shall be rewarded. But if when it shall be demanded of you what is become of such and such souls? You shall be dumb, having nothing to say, your conscience flying in your face, and it shall appear that it has been much owing to your unfaithfulness; O how amazing will your case be! What confusion and astonishment will fill your soul before your great master and Judge! And remember that the blood of such souls will be required at your hands. Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

And suffer me, *dear brother*, to tell you, that you must another day meet these souls that you are now going to take the charge of, before the judgment seat of Christ; and if by means of your faithfulness towards them, in your work, you shall meet them at the right hand of Christ in glory, how joyful a meeting will it be to you! They will be indeed your crown of rejoicing in that day. But if you behold them with devils at the left hand, in horror and despair, your conscience accusing you of unfaithfulness towards them, and it appears that they are lost through your neglect, how amazing will the sight of them be to you!

Your master and mine is this day calling me to resign the pastoral care of a number of souls into your hands, that have hitherto been committed to my care: It is with cheerfulness that I can now resign them to the care of one, concerning whom I can have so much hope that he will be faithful in his care of them. May the Lord of the harvest enable you to discharge your duty towards them more faithfully than I have done, and make you a far greater blessing to them; and may you come with them at the day of judgment before Christ with exceeding joy, and in robes of glory, and say then as Christ himself will say to the Father, when he shall come with all the souls that were given him of the Father, and present them before him in perfect glory, *here am I, and the children which thou hast given me.*

2. I would apply myself to those whose souls are now about to be committed to the care of that servant of Christ that is now to be ordained to the pastoral office in this place.

Beloved brethren, and dear children, It is your immortal souls that is the precious treasure that the great Creator and Saviour of souls seems now to be about to commit to the care of him whom you have chosen to be your pastor. And indeed it is a great charge, an high betrustment; and he ought to use his utmost care and diligence that you may not be eternally lost. But if your pastor should exercise such care that you may be saved, surely you ought to take care for the salvation of your own souls: It nearly concerns him that you should be saved; but much more nearly does it concern you. Let your minister be never so careful and watchful, if you take no care for yourselves, his faithfulness and diligence will signify nothing, unless it be to harden you, and aggravate your damnation. In such a case, the more care and pains he takes for your salvation, the greater will your eternal misery be; for all will be only a savour of death unto death. Those people are like to sink the deepest into hell hereafter, that go to hell from under the care of the most faithful ministers, that have taken the most pains to save them from going to hell. The preciousness of your souls has now been made use of as an argument with your chosen pastor to take care for your salvation; but much more may it be

used as an argument with you to seek your own salvation; for therein lies the preciousness of your souls, in their being of infinite worth to yourselves, appearing in the infinite loss you will sustain if they are lost, and your infinite gain if they are saved; herein lies that preciousness of the soul that Christ speaks of, Matt. xvi. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and loose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

It is not only your minister that is concerned in the work that he is to perform among you, but you also are infinitely concerned in it: And it is not only he, but you also that are infinitely concerned in the account that he has to give of the discharge of his office among you. You must all of you hereafter meet your minister before the judgment seat of Christ; and if then it shall be found that he has been faithful, and that you have made an ill improvement of his ministry, and so failed of the grace of God, the sight of the devil will not be so terrible to you at that day as the sight of your minister; for he will rise up in judgment against you, and your pastor, that above all other persons in the world, excepting yourselves, is concerned to endeavour your salvation, will then above all other persons appear against you before the Judge to witness against you and condemn you. But how joyful will it be to you, as well as to him, if he renders his account with joy, for these reasons that he has been both faithful and successful with respect to you, and appears with you in glory at the right hand of Christ, and has to say to the great judge concerning himself and you, *Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me!* What a joyful meeting of minister and people will there be! And how will you be each other's crown of rejoicing! But if your souls perish, you will be present when it shall be required by Jesus Christ of your minister to give an account of such and such souls that are lost, which were committed to his care; and how dreadful will it be to you, if you shall then hear him boldly and truly say before the Judge, "Lord, thou knowest that I have sincerely and faithfully endeavoured their salvation. I have not been slack nor negligent towards them. I have earnestly watched for their souls, and diligently and unweariedly used all the means with them that thou didst appoint; they perished not through my neglect, but through their own obstinate negligence and wickedness!" In such a case your minister will be acquitted and justified, but you will be condemned with a most aggravated condemnation, and your blood will be upon your own head. Ezek. xxxiii. 2, 3, 4. *Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, when I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for their watchman, if when he see the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the*

people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. The good account your minister has to give of his own faithfulness, will incense the displeasure of the Judge towards you. Luke xiv. 17. *So the servant came and showed his lord these things: Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, go out quickly*, &c.

And if you would have the account your minister shall have to give concerning you to be profitable and joyful to you, do not neglect your duty towards him; endeavour by all means in your power to put him under the best advantage for serviceableness and success among you: do what in you lies to encourage his heart and strengthen his hands. This I know to be a thing of vast importance, as you would have your pastor a blessing to you, and the successful instrument of the salvation of your souls and the souls of your children: therefore suffer me to be a little particular with you upon this head. I may be the more bold towards you as you hitherto have been of the flock that Christ has committed to my care, and I hope some of you my spiritual children; therefore as my beloved children I counsel and warn you.

If you would meet your minister with comfort another day, do not neglect doing what belongs to you comfortably to support him, so as to enable him to attend on his great work without distraction, and to give himself wholly to the business of seeking and promoting the eternal welfare and happiness of you and your children; without being disheartened by the difficulties and indigencies of straitened circumstances, or being diverted by exercising care, and taken off by involving himself in worldly business for his necessary support. While we are in the body our heavenly Father knows that we have need of these things, and the way that he hath provided for ministers' supply, is by their partaking of the temporal good things of the people to whom they minister spiritual things. 1 Cor. ix. 4, &c. *Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?—Have we not power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of* Moses, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

—*Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and they that wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel.* 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in word and doctrine: For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his reward.* 2 Tim. ii. 6. *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.* Gal. vi. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.* Christ would not have minister's time and thoughts taken up about providing temporal good things for their own support, but would have them wholly provided for by their people. Matt. x. 9, 10. *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor script for your journey, neither two coats a piece, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.* Agreeable to these directions he gave the *twelve apostles*, are the directions he gave the *seventy*, when he sent them out. Luke x. 7. *In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.*

You see what great care Christ has taken in this matter, and how full and abundant the scripture is in commands and directions concerning the support of ministers.

I know you are small, and in your new beginnings in this place, and not so able as many other congregations. But if we may give credit to the word of God, for you well and comfortably to support your pastor, is not the way to be poorer. Prov. iii. 9, 10. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.* To give to the Lord is not the way to be poor, but the way to be supplied by the Lord. Christ now is not personally, and in his human nature, here upon earth, to be supported by temporal good things from his disciples, as once he was: but though he be now gone from hence into a far country, yet he has not left his disciples without opportunity in this way of showing their love to him; for there are two sorts of persons that he has appointed to be his receivers, *viz.* his indigent members, and his ministers; as of old God appointed the poor and the Levite to receive the tithes and other offerings that were made to the Lord, Deut. xvi. 11, 14. and ch. xiv. 28, 29. and xxiv. 10, 11, 12. What is given to ministers is a sacrifice to God: so the apostle represents what was sent to him for his supply from the *Philippians*, Phil. iv. 18. *Having received of* Epaphroditus *the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.* And Christ, when he

sent forth his disciples to preach, and had directed that they should take no provision for themselves, because the labourer is worthy of his reward, he says Matth. x. 40. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

And since what is given to your pastor is given to Christ, you may be assured that you cannot consult your own temporal, as well as spiritual interest better, than by liberally supplying of him; for he that lendeth to the Lord shall be repayed again with large interest. And as to your ability, if there be but a cheerful, ready mind, the greatest difficulty is got over; if you find this, there is no doubt but that God will make the duty of supporting your minister in other respects easy to you: God loves a willing offering, and a cheerful giver; if you will do your part in opening your hearts and hands, God will do his part in finding you wherewithal. But if a people grudge what they do, are always full of fears how they shall pay their rates, and excessively cautious lest they should run themselves into difficulty, and straiten themselves and families by giving to Christ, no wonder it proves difficult: it is the way to meet with nothing else but difficulties in their outward circumstances; for *there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; but to withhold more than is meet, tends only to poverty*, Prov. xi. 24.

The *Jews*, in the days of the prophet *Haggai*, were few in number, and were under difficult and straitened circumstances; and they made it an excuse why they should not be at the expense that was requisite in order to build the house of God, and set up his worship; and so for a time neglected it. And in the mean time none of their affairs prospered; they sowed much and brought in little; they eat, but they had not enough; they drank, but were not filled with drink: they clothed them, but there was none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes: they looked for much, and lo it came to little; and the heaven was stayed from dew, and the earth was stayed from her fruit. Hag. chap. i. So in the days of the prophet *Malachi* it was a time of scarcity, and the people thought themselves thereby excused from paying tithes for the support of the *Levites*, and so robbed God of his due; but got nothing by it, but *God cursed them with a curse;* they made that scarcity and want the excuse for their backwardness to support God's ministers, which was its punishment; and God tells them by the prophet that if they would cheerfully do their duty in that respect it would be a sure way to have their wants plentifully supplied. Mal. iii. 1, 9, 10. "Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows

of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." What can God say more to encourage a people cheerfully to run the venture of expending what is necessary for the comfortable and honourable support of the ministry?

And here let me warn you in particular, that you do not only do pretty well by your minister for a while at first, while the relation between you and him is a new thing, and then afterward, when your minister's necessities are increased, begin to fail, as it too frequently happens.

Some may be ready to say, it is no wonder ministers should be forward to urge such a duty as this, wherein their own temporal interest is so much concerned, a covetous disposition will make them love to harp upon this string.—I have not been much in insisting on this duty in my own pulpit, where it would especially concern my temporal interest; and blessed be God that I have had no more occasion.—But whatever any may judge of the secrets of my heart, with regard to the principles that I have been influenced by, in what I have now said; it is enough for you to whom I have spoke it, that I have demonstrated that what I have delivered is the mind of God; and also (if there be any truth in his word) that what I have recommended is not only for the temporal interest of your minister, but also for your own both temporal and spiritual interest.

Another article of advice that I would give you, is, to beware that you do not weaken your minister's hands, and wound yourselves by contention. You are but a small people, and you will be a very foolish people indeed if you are divided against yourselves. Contention among a people hinders all manner of comfort and prosperity either of soul or body; it makes them a torment to themselves and one another; it puts them every way under disadvantages, and weakens the whole body like a consumption.

There are two sorts of contention I would warn you against.

1. Avoid contention among yourselves about your own temporal affairs: this will exceedingly tend to render a minister's labours ineffectual; and it is what greatly damps the spirit and discourages the heart of a minister, to see his people divided into parties, and envying one another, and entertaining mutual prejudices, jealousies and grudges, and so backbiting and reproaching one another, and carrying on secret plots and designs one against another.

2. Avoid quarrelling with your minister in matters of church discipline. This is a common thing, but a most unchristian thing, and tends greatly to weaken the hands of a minister in the whole of his work, and render all to no purpose. The exercise of the discipline of God's house is the most difficult part of that great work that a minister has to do; and it becomes a

christian people to their utmost to strengthen their minister's hands in this difficult business, and say as the people said to *Ezra* the priest, with respect to the affair of purging the church of *Israel* from the scandal of those that had married strange wives, Ezra x. 4. *Arise, for this matter belongeth to thee; we also will be with thee: Be of good courage and do it.*

To conclude, If you would have your minister successful among you, and a blessing to you, and if you would be a happy people, then love one another and love your minister. There are some professors, in some of our towns, that are anti-ministerial men; they seem to have a disposition to dislike men of that order; they are apt to be prejudiced against them; and to be suspicious of them, and talk against them; and it seems to be as it were natural to them to be unfriendly and unkind towards their own ministers, and to make difficulty for them. But I do not believe there is a true christian on earth that is of this character; on the contrary the feet of them that bring good tidings, and publish the Gospel of salvation are beautiful in the eyes of all the true children of *Zion;* and every one that receives Christ, and whose heart is governed by a supreme love to him, has a disposition to receive, love, and honour his messengers. It was the distinguishing mark by which God manifested the person he had chosen to be the wife of *Isaac*, that type of Christ, that it was the damsel that should give kind and friendly entertainment to *Abraham's* servant or steward that was sent to espouse her and bring her home to *Isaac;* and therein was a type of the Gospel ministry, Gen. xxiv. 14, &c. See to it that you thus entertain the steward of the house of God that comes on this blessed errand to you.

If you and your minister thus live in peace, it will be the way for you to be a happy society, to flourish and prosper with all manner of prosperity, to have Christ dwelling among you; and for things to be brought to so blessed an event at last, as that he that is the great shepherd of the sheep, that purchased the souls of men with his blood, and your pastor that has the care of your souls committed to him, and yourselves and children, all shall rejoice together in another world, agreeable to John iv. 36. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON IMPORTANT

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THIS EDITION.

The judiciousness of the "advice" given to Dr. Edwards, and with which he complied, may be justly questioned, respecting the "large quotations" referred to by Dr. Erskine, as they greatly swelled the publication, and thereby impeded the circulation of the President's original and very valuable thoughts. However, in the present edition of his works, it would be extremely improper to insert "long quotations" out of Tillotson, Jones on the Canon, &c. indiscriminately, and without abridgment; not only because these authors are so common in England, compared with America, but also because it will be more satisfactory to the biblical student to consult the originals themselves, and to see the arguments in their proper connexion. This equally applies to the senses of "Observations," and to that of the subsequent "Remarks." The latter of these were before cast into distinct chapters, and the former are now reduced to their proper heads, by which they acquire a more interesting aspect, and from the circumstance of an easy connexion, an additional persuasive force.

It is certain that many of the original "Observations" and of the "Remarks on important Theological Controversies," were inserted in the author's common-place book prior to the composition of some of his elaborate publications on the same subjects, when his thoughts appear in a more mature state, and in a more connected form. Of course, where the subjects coincided, he would avail himself of the substance of *such adversaria* in those treatises. On these grounds, independent of other considerations—and especially from a due regard to the author's reputation, which is deservedly high—it is obviously necessary, that a selection more choice and scrupulous be now made. And it may be confidently asserted that these two series, as they now stand, form a very valuable part of the author's work.

PREFACE.

President Edwards has left many manuscript volumes of observations, on almost all subjects in divinity, which either occurred to him from his own meditation, or from the books he read. He wrote these volumes, not with any design they should ever be published in their present form, but that he might retain thoughts which appeared to him worth preserving, both for his own improvement, and for the instruction and edification of others. The judicious author of the life of this great and good man, gave his opinion, that, from these manuscripts, a number of volumes might be published, which, though more imperfect than if the author had prepared them for public view, would afford much new light and entertainment to the church of Christ. The high and well-merited reputation, not only of the books prepared for the press of the President, but of the sermons published since his death, have occasioned many solicitations to his son, Dr. Edwards, of New Haven, to collect and print such part of those manuscripts as might be generally useful. In compliance with these requests, he has not grudged the labour of transcribing this volume of miscellanies, which, if it prove acceptable, will be followed by more, as the Doctor's health and leisure permit.

Many important and original thoughts occur, on the evidences of Revealed Religion.—Moral and religious knowledge only from revelation.—Christ and his apostles taught not that the last judgment was near.—Jesus's prophecies, a proof that he was the Christ, and that he was God.—Propriety of the general judgment.—Reasonableness of some particular doctrines.—Miracles of Jesus not opposed by counterfeit miracles.—Miracles of Jesus superior to those under the old testament.—Much instruction concisely conveyed by scripture metaphors.—Excellencies of scripture history.—The propriety of gradual improvement in understanding the scriptures.—The propriety of room being left for discovering truth by scripture consequences.—The necessity of divine revelation vindicated.—Jesus proved the Christ, from his destroying heathen idolatry according to scripture prophecy.—Propagation of Mahometanism not parallel to that of christianity.—State of the Jewish nation, an evidence of revealed religion.—Observations on Christ's miracles.—Equally striking and judicious are many of the reflections on the mysteries of revelation—On the trinity and the divinity of Christ.

—Many, therefore, who relish solid reasoning on religious subjects, though not adorned with the beauties of eloquence, will deem themselves much indebted to Dr. Edwards for gathering these fragments, that nothing might be lost.

Some, who have purchased and read Archbishop Tillotson's sermons, Stapferi Theologia Polemica, Bennet's Inspiration of the Scriptures, Grotius de Veritate Religionis Christianæ, Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, Religion of Jesus delineated, Deism revealed, and Jones on the Canon, may possibly wish that the *large quotations* from them had been omitted. But Dr. Edwards was advised to publish them, as they may prove an antidote to the deistical notions spreading in some parts of America, where these books are in few hands. These passages may lead some to read these books, who otherwise would not have known them. The President's originality of genious, and attachment to Calvinist principles, did not hinder his seeking and finding instruction in their writings, whose system of theology was very opposite to his. It were well, if in this he was imitated by all who possess distinguished talents, and who boast of liberality of sentiment.

JOHN ERSKINE.

Edinburgh, Sept. 30, 1793.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON IMPORTANT

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS,

ORIGINAL AND COLLECTED.

PART I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FACTS AND EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE OBJECTIONS OF INFIDELS.

CHAPTER I.

General Observations.

§ 1. I SUPPOSE it will be acknowledged by the Deists, that the Christian religion is the most rational and pure that ever was established in any *society of men;* and that they will except only *themselves*, as serving God in a manner more according to the will than the Christian manner. But can any believe that God has so wholly thrown away mankind, that there never yet has been a *society* of men, that have rightly paid respect to their Creator?

It is easily proved that the highest end and happiness of man, is to *view God's excellency*, to *love* him, and *receive expressions* of his love. This love, including all those other affections which depend upon, and are necessarily connected with it, we express in worship. The highest end of society among men, therefore, must be, to assist and join with each other in this employment. But how comes it to pass, that this end of society was never yet obtained among Deists? Where was ever any social worship statedly performed by them? And were they disposed socially to express their love and honour, which way would they go about it? They have nothing from God to direct them. Doubtless there would be

perpetual dissensions about it, unless they were disposed to fall in with the Christian model. We may be convinced, therefore, that revelation is necessary to right *social worship*.

§ 2. There never was any religion but that which we profess, and those formed from it, that pretended to inform us of the nature of God; that there is but one God, how the world came into being, and how God governs it. What other religion discovered God's great designs; what is his will, and how he should be served? declared the reward of obedience, and punishment of disobedience; the nature of man's happiness, and the end for which he was made? that gave us good moral rules; told us what will become of the world hereafter; explained how we came to be sinful and miserable, and how we may escape sin and misery? gave an account of the great revolutions of the world, and the successions of God's works in the universe; and where his true worshippers have been, and what has befallen them; or informed us how the world came to apostatize from the true worship of God? Christianity is the only religion that ever pretended that there should a time come, when it should be the religion of the world in general.

§ 3. The Jewish religion, as at present professed, most certainly differs from what reason evidently declares to be the essence of religion. It does not state aright the highest end and happiness of man, his chief business and greatest misery, and the true worship of God. Undoubtedly the Messiah was to come to advance the best interest and true happiness of mankind, which certainly consist in what the gospel declares our Jesus advanced, and not in what the Jews expect the Messiah will do.

§ 4. I think it certain, that seeing the miracles of Christ were done, for three years and a half, so publicly all over Judea; and seeing there was such violent opposition there, so soon after, against the Christians; if the matters of fact had been false, they would have been denied by the Jews generally; and if this had been the case, we should have known it. The Jews afterward would much more have denied them; which it is evident they did not. If they had, they would have been also denied by the Heathens who wrote against the Christians. But they were not denied. It is impossible that the whole world should have turned Christian, in three hundred years after the facts were so publicly done, if they had been generally false. If the Jews had denied the matters of fact at first, they would undoubtedly have denied them at this day, seeing they are so tenacious of the traditions of their fathers. Christ's resurrection was openly published within a few days after his death, on the day of Pentecost. It is undoubted, that the

number of the Christians increased every where exceedingly from that time; so that a considerable alteration was speedily made by it in the face of the world. Whether the matters of fact were written or no, they were universally talked of. The conversion of the Roman empire to the Christian religion, was the most remarkable thing that ever happened among the nations of the world; and it would be unaccountable that it should have happened upon the story of a few obscure men, without inquiring into the matters related.

§ 5. I am convinced of the necessity of a revelation, considering how negligent, dull, and careless about a future happiness, I should be, if I was left to discover that happiness by unassisted reason: especially if there were no revelation at all, about what is pleasing to God; how he accepts our services; after what manner he loves his servants; how he will pardon sin, &c.

§ 6. It is certain that Jesus Christ had none of the advantages of education, to get learning and knowledge; and it is also certain, that every where in his speeches, he showed an uncommon insight into things, a great knowledge of the true nature of virtue and morality, and what was most acceptable to God, vastly beyond the rest of the nation—take Scribes and Pharisees and all. And how did he come by it? how did he get it at Nazareth? Those who have not an education in these days, may get much by books, which are so common: but books of learning were not to be had then. Yea, it is evident that he knew vastly more than any of the philosophers and wise men in the whole world, by those rational descriptions which he gave of God and his attributes; of his government and providence; and of man's nature, business, end, and happiness; of what is pleasing to God; of the immortality of the soul, and a future state. How knew he, so exactly, truths perhaps demonstrable by reason, but never found out before? &c.

§ 7. That Christ was really dead, appears from many considerations. It is very unreasonable to imagine, that he feigned himself dead; for, what reason had he to think that he should have success, if he did? or to expect they would take him down before he was quite dead? Or, if he had had such a design, it was impossible that he should act his part so accurately, as not to be discovered or suspected. Besides, if he was not dead when they took him down from the cross, he was very near it; and, no doubt but his grievous wounds, the loss of blood, and fasting so long, would have extinguished his life before the third day. And if then he only rose out of a swoon, how came he perfectly sound at once? Doubtless, his hands and feet were much torn by bearing his weight so long

on iron spikes driven through them. And if he rose from the dead in no supernatural sense, whither did he go when he rose? What became of him? We have no account of his dying again: nor was he yet to be found after a few weeks.

§ 8. If Christianity was not true, it would never afford so much matter for rational and penetrating minds to be exercised upon. If it were false, such minds would find it empty, and it would be a force upon the intellect to set upon meditating upon *that* which has no other order, foundation, and mutual dependence to be discovered in its parts, than what is accidental. A strong and piercing mind would feel itself exceedingly bound and hindered. But in fact, there is the like liberty in the study of Christianity, and as much improvement of the mind, as in the study of natural philosophy, or any study whatsoever; yea, a great deal more. And whatever may be said about Mahometan divinity, I cannot be convinced but that a mind that has the faculty and habit of clear and distinct reasoning, would find nothing but chains, fetters, and confusion, if it should pretend to fix its reason upon it.

§ 9. Seeing the beauty of the corporeal world consists chiefly in representing spiritual beauties, and the beauties of minds are infinitely the greatest; we therefore may conclude, that God, when he created the world, showed his own perfection and beauties far the most charmingly and clearly, in the spiritual part of the world. But seeing spiritual beauty consists principally in virtue and holiness; and seeing there is so little of this beauty to be seen now on earth; hence we may fairly conclude, that there has been a great fall and defection in this part of the spiritual world, from its primitive beauty and charms.

Corollary. Seeing this is so agreeable to the account that the Christian religion gives of the matter; and seeing it is evident from many arguments, that God intends not to give over man as lost, but has a merciful intention of restoring him to his primitive beauty; and seeing we are told this, and the manner of it, in the Christian religion alone; and seeing the account is so rational: it is a great confirmation of the truth of Christianity.

§ 10. It is a convincing argument for the truth of the Christian religion, and that it stands upon a most sure basis, that none have ever yet been able to prove it false, though there have been many men of all sorts, many fine wits and men of great learning, that have spent themselves and ransacked the world for arguments against it, and this for many ages.

§ 11. It is exceedingly improbable, that it should ever enter into the head of any mortal, to invent such a strange system

of visions, as that of the Revelation of Saint John, of which he himself could give no account of the meaning or design, and did not pretend to it. What design could he have in it? But if he had a design, the frame of the visions is not a whit like a random invention, without any view or design as to interpretation.

§ 12. It does not seem to me at all likely, that any person among the Jews, so long ago, should have so perfect a knowledge of nature, and the secret springs of human affections, as to be able to feign any thing so perfectly and exquisitely agreeable to nature, as the incidents in Joseph's history, and the other histories of the Bible; particularly the history of Genesis.

§ 13. Such kind of miracles, as healing the sick, the blind, the deaf, dumb, lame, &c.; and creating bread and flesh, and turning water into wine, are greater than those that are so much more pompous, as causing universal darkness, dividing the sea, the shaking and burning of Mount Sinai, &c. The healing of the sick and distracted, do more especially manifest divine power, for this cause, that we have reason to conclude mankind especially are subject to God's providence, and that their health and the exercise of their reason, are alone in his hands, and that it is not in the power of any evil spirit to give them and take them at his pleasure, however great power he may be supposed to have over the inanimate creatures.

When a person appears, that has evidently the whole course of nature at all times subject to his command, so that he can alter it how and when he pleases, we have the greatest reason to think *that* person has divine authority, and that the author and upholder of nature favours him, and gives approbation to what he pretends thereby. For we know, that the course of nature is God's established course of acting upon creatures; and we cannot think that he would give power to any evil spirit to alter it when he pleases, for evil purposes. But Christ manifestly had the course of nature so subject to his will and command.

§ 14. It would not have been proper for Christ constantly to dwell among men after his resurrection. Men would be exceedingly apt to fall into idolatry; and, because they *saw* the man Christ Jesus, would be apt to direct their worship to the *human* nature. Therefore, we are not to see the man Christ Jesus till we are perfected, and are not liable to temptation on such occasions. For this reason, probably, it was not convenient for Christ to appear in great majesty and glory when on earth, but the contrary; for this reason, Christ endeavoured to hide his transfiguration, and many other miracles, till after he was risen; and, for this reason, he did not converse constantly with his disciples after his resurrection, as

before. All these things were done in a manner the most wise and fit that can be imagined.

§ 15. If human reason, by any thing that has happened since the creation, be really very much corrupted; and, if God is still propitious, and does not throw us off, but reserves us for that end for which he made us; it cannot be imagined that he would leave us to our reason, as the only rule to guide us in that business, which is the highest end of life: For it is not to be depended upon; and yet we exceedingly need something that may be depended upon in reference to our everlasting welfare. It does not seem to me reasonable to suppose, that if God be merciful after we have forfeited his favour, he will manifest his mercy only in some *mitigations* of that misery into which we have plunged ourselves, leaving us inevitably to endure the rest: but that he will quite restore us, in case of our acceptance of his offered favour.

§ 16. It seems much the most rational to suppose, that the universal law by which mankind are to be governed, should be a *written* law. For if that rule, by which God intends the world shall be regulated, and kept in decent and happy order, be supposed to be expressed no other way than by nature; man's prejudices will render it, in innumerable circumstances, a most uncertain thing. For though "it must be granted, that men who are willing to transgress, may abuse written as well as unwritten laws, and expound them so as may best serve their turn upon occasion; yet, it must be allowed, that, in the nature of the thing, revelation is a better guard than a bare scheme of principles without it. For men must take more pains to conquer the sense of a standing, written law, which is ready to confront them upon all occasions. They must more industriously tamper with their passions, and blind their understandings, before they can bring themselves to believe what they have a mind to believe, in contradiction to the words of an express and formal declaration of God Almighty's will, than there can be any pretence or occasion for, when they have no more than their own thoughts and ideas to manage. These are flexible things, and a man may much more easily turn and wind them as he pleases, than he can evade a plain and positive law, which determines the kinds and measures of his duty, and threatens disobedience in such terms as require long practice and experience to make handsome salvos and distinctions to get over."* And, upon this account, also, that it is fit in every case, when the law is made known, that also the sanctions, the rewards, and punishments, should be known at the same time. But nature could never have determined these with any certainty.

* Ditton on the Resurrection.

§ 17. Raising the dead to life, is given in the Old Testament, as a certain proof of the authority and mission of a prophet; and that what he says is the truth. 1 Kings xvii. 24. "And the woman said to Elijah, By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." So that, if the Old Testament is the word of God, Jesus was a true prophet.

§ 18. The being of God is evident by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures themselves are an evidence of their own divine authority, after the same manner as the existence of a human thinking being is evident by the motions, behaviour, and speech of a body animated by a rational mind. For we know this no otherwise, than by the consistency, harmony, and concurrence of the train of actions and sounds, and their agreement to all that we can suppose to be in a rational mind. These are a clear evidence of understanding and design, which are the original of these actions. There is that universal harmony, consent, and concurrence in the drift, such an universal appearance of a wonderful and glorious design, such stamps every where of exalted wisdom, majesty, and holiness, in matter, manner, contexture, and aim; that the evidence is the same; that the scriptures are the word and work of a divine mind—to one that is thoroughly acquainted with them—as that the words and actions of an understanding man are from a rational mind. An infant, when it first comes into the world, sees persons act, and hears their voice, before it has so much comprehension as to see something of their consistence, harmony, and concurrence. It makes no distinction between their bodies, and other things; their motions and sounds, and the motions and sounds of inanimate things. But as its comprehension increases, the understanding and design begin to appear. So it is with men that are as little acquainted with the scriptures, as infants with the actions of human bodies. They cannot see any evidence of a divine mind, as the original of it; because they have not comprehension enough to apprehend the harmony, wisdom, &c.

§ 19. Were it not for divine revelation, I am persuaded, that there is no one doctrine of that which we call natural religion, which, notwithstanding all philosophy and learning, would not be for ever involved in darkness, doubts, endless disputes, and dreadful confusion. Many things, now they are revealed, seem very plain. It is one thing, to see that a truth is exceedingly agreeable to reason, after we have had it explained to us, and have been told the reasons of it; and another, to find it out, and clearly and certainly to explain it by mere reason. It is one thing, to prove a thing after we are shown how; and another, to find it out, and prove it of ourselves.

If there never had been any revelation, I believe the world would have been full of endless disputes about the very being of a God; whether the world was from eternity or not; and whether the form and order of the world did not result from the mere nature of matter. Ten thousand different schemes there would have been about it. And, if it were allowed that there was a first cause of all things, there would have been endless disputes, and abundance of uncertainty, to determine what sort of a thing that first cause was. Some, it may be, would have thought that it was properly an intelligent mind and a voluntary agent. Others might say, that it was some principle of things, of which we could have no kind of ideas. Some would have called it a voluntary agent: some, a principle exerting itself by a natural necessity. There might have been many schemes contrived about this, and some would like one best, and some another; and, amongst those that held, that the original of all things was superior intelligence and will, there probably would have been everlasting doubts and disputes, whether there was one only, or more. Some, perhaps, would have said, there was but one; some, that there were two; the one, the principle of good; the other, the principle of evil: others, that there was a society, or a world of them. And, among those that held, that there was but one mind, there would be abundance of uncertainty what sort of a being he was; whether he was good, or evil; whether he was just, or unjust; holy or wicked; gracious or cruel; or, whether he was partly good, and partly evil; and how far he concerned himself with the world, after he had made it; and how far things were owing to his providence, or whether at all; how far he concerned himself with mankind; what was pleasing to him in them, and what was displeasing; or whether he cared any thing about it; whether he delighted in justice and order, or not; and whether he would reward the one, and punish the other; and how, and when, and where, and to what degree. There would have been abundance of doubt and dispute concerning what this mind expected from us, and how we should behave towards him; or whether he expected we should anywise concern ourselves with him: whether we ever ought to apply ourselves to him any way; whether we ought to speak to him, as expecting that he would take any notice of us: how we should show our respect to him; whether we ought to praise and commend him in our addresses; whether we ought to ask that of him which we need; whether or no he would forgive any, after they had offended him; when they had reason to think they were forgiven, and what they should do that they might be forgiven; and whether it is ever worth the while for them that are so often offending, to try for it; whether there were not some sins so great, that God never would, upon

any terms, forgive them, and how great they must be in order to that. Men would be exceedingly at a loss to know when they were in favour with him, and upon what terms they could be in his favour. They would be in a dreadful uncertainty about a future state; whether there be any, and, if there be, whether it is a state of rewards and punishments; and, if it is, what kind of state it is, and how men are to be rewarded and punished, to what degree, and how long; whether man's soul be eternal or not. and, if it be, whether it is to remain in another world in a fixed state, or change often.

Every man would plead for the lawfulness of this or that practice, just as suited his fancy, and agreed with his interest and appetites; and there would be room for a great deal of uncertainty and difference of opinion among those that were most speculative and impartial. There would be uncertainty, in a multitude of instances, what was just, and what unjust. It would be very uncertain how far self-interest should govern men, and how far love to our neighbour; how far revenge would be right, and whether or no a man might hate his neighbour, and for what causes: what degree of passion and ambition was justifiable and laudable: what sensual enjoyments were lawful, and what not: how far we ought to honour, respect, and submit to our parents, and other superiors: how far it would be lawful to dissemble and deceive. It seems to me, there would be infinite confusion in these things; and that there would hardly be any such thing as conscience in the world.

The world has had a great deal of experience of the necessity of a revelation; we may see it in all ages, that have been without a revelation. In what gross darkness and brutal stupidity have such places, in these matters, always been overwhelmed! and how many and how great and foolish mistakes, and what endless uncertainty and differences of opinion have there been among the most learned and philosophical! Yet, there never was a real trial how it would be with mankind in this respect, without having any thing from revelation. I believe that most of those parts of natural religion, that were held by the Heathens before Christ, were owing to tradition from those of their forefathers who had the light of revelation. And many of those being most evidently agreeable to reason, were more easily upheld and propagated. Many of their wise men who had influence and rule over them, saw their rectitude and agreeableness to reason better than others. Some of them travelled much, and those things which appeared most agreeable to their reason, they transplanted to their own country. Judea was a sort of light among the nations, though they did not know it. The practice and principles of that country, kept the neighbouring nations in remembrance of

traditions, which *they* had from their forefathers; and so kept them from degenerating so much as otherwise they would have done. In fact, the philosophers had the foundation of most of their truths, from the ancients, or from the Phœnicians, or what they picked up here and there of the relics of revelation.

How came all the Heathen nations to agree in the custom of sacrificing! The light of nature did not teach it them; without doubt, they had it from tradition; and, therefore, it need not seem strange, that what of natural religion they had amongst them, came the same way. I am persuaded, that mankind would have been like a herd of beasts, with respect to their knowledge in all important truths, if there never had been any such thing as revelation in the world; and that they never would have risen out of their brutality. We see, that those who live at the greatest distance from revelation, are far the most brutish. The Heathens in America, and in some of the utmost parts of Asia and Africa, are far more barbarous than those who formerly lived in Rome, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Chaldea. Their traditions are more worn out, and they are more distant from places enlightened with revelation. The Chinese, descended probably from the subjects of Noah, that holy man, have held more by tradition from him, than other nations, and so have been a more civilized people. The increase of learning and philosophy in the Christian world, is owing to revelation. The doctrines of revealed religion, are the foundation of all useful and excellent knowledge. The word of God leads barbarous nations into the way of using their understandings. It brings their minds into a way of reflecting and abstracted reasoning; and delivers from uncertainty in the first principles, such as, the being of God, the dependence of all things upon him, being subject to his influence and providence, and being ordered by his wisdom. Such principles as these, are the basis of all true philosophy, as appears more and more, as philosophy improves. Revelation delivers mankind from that distraction and confusion, which discourages all attempts to improve in knowledge. Revelation actually gives men a most rational account of religion and morality, and the highest philosophy, and all the greatest things that belong to learning, concerning God, the world, human nature, spirits, providence, time, and eternity. Revelation not only gives us the foundation and first principles of all learning, but it gives us the *end*, the only end, that would be sufficient to move man to the pursuit.

Revelation redeems nations from a vicious, sinful, and brutish way of living, which will effectually keep out learning. It is, therefore, unreasonable to suppose, that philosophy might supply the defect of revelation. Knowledge is easy to us that

understand by revelation; but we do not know what brutes we should have been, if there never had been any revelation.

§ 20. As Moses was so intimately conversant with God, and so continually under the divine conduct, it cannot be thought, that when he wrote the history of the creation and fall of man, and the history of the church from the creation, he should not be under the divine direction in such an affair.

§ 21. It is certainly necessary, that, in the word of God, we should have a history of the life of Christ, of his incarnation, his death, his resurrection and ascension, and his actions, and of the instructions he gave the world.

If God expects that we shall receive any New Testament at all, we must suppose that God's providence would be concerned in this matter. God took this care with respect to the books of the Old Testament, that no books should be received by the Jewish church, and delivered down in the canon of the Old Testament, but what were his word, and owned by Christ. We may, therefore, conclude, that he would still take the same care of his church, with respect to the New Testament.

§ 22. It seems to me an unaccountable dulness, that when intelligent men read David's psalms, and other prayers and songs of the Old Testament, they are not at once convinced, that the Jews had the true worship and communion of the One great and holy God; and that no other nation upon earth had them. It seems as clear as the sun at noon-day; and so indeed from all the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament.

§ 23. We need not wonder at all, that God should so often reveal himself by prophets and miracles, to the Israelitish nation, and that now we should see nothing of this nature; for this way of revealing himself is not at all suitable to the present state of the church. The church was *then* confined to one particular nation, that God chose on purpose to make them the receptacle of his revelation, and the conveyancer of it to the rest of the world. And I can think of no other way that it could be done with any tolerable convenience, but by a chosen peculiar nation, that should alone be God's people, and have the true religion among them. Therefore, it was highly convenient and necessary, that there should be such a manner of communication, with such a nation. It was also necessary, in the first *transition* of this revelation from the Jews to the world, as it was in the apostles' times, that the world, receiving this revelation from them, might see God still revealing himself; and so might receive it from God, in the same manner as *they* received it. But that God should now reveal himself after that manner to his church, is no way necessary, nor at all suitable to the gospel state of the church, which is not any particular inclosure, but is dispersed through

the whole world. How is it practicable that God should treat with the church now, in such a way as he did with that peculiar nation? Besides, if it were practicable, it would be very inexpedient; for, what need of new revelations to the end of the world? Is it not better that God should give the world a book, that should be the summary of his will, to which all nations in all ages may resort? Prophecy and miracles are nothing without charity; like the shadow without the substance: and, seeing the substance is come, what need the shadow should be continued? Seeing the end is come, it would be impertinent still to continue the means. The church now enjoys that glory, in comparison with which all the glory of prophecy and miracles, even those of that extraordinary prophet, Moses, is no glory at all: 2 Cor. iii. 10.

§ 24. If there be any such thing needful, or at all proper and suitable, that God should reveal himself to mankind, it is perhaps impossible that he should do it in any other way, or with any other kind of evidence, than he has done it. No kind of miracle can be thought of, that would be more evidential, than those by which Christianity has been confirmed.

§ 25. It is no argument against the reality of the incarnation of Jesus Christ—whereby God became the same person with a man—that there is nothing else like it any where to be seen; because it was evidently God's design to show his wisdom, by doing a thing that was, and for ever would have been, far beyond the thoughts of any creatures. Man's fall was God's opportunity to show how far his contrivance and wisdom was beyond that of all creatures.

§ 26. It was often prophesied among the children of Israel, that the gods of the nations round about, should perish from off the earth; and that they should cease to be acknowledged and worshipped: but that the worship and acknowledgment of *their* God should remain for ever, and should, in due time, take place of those others. Jer. x. 11. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." This came to pass by means of the Christian religion. It is Christ's appearing, and the preaching of his doctrine in the world, that has been the means of it all. It is by means of these, that the Mahometan parts of the world came to acknowledge the One God: and it is by these means, that even the Deists come to it.—Again, it has been only by means of Jesus Christ's appearing and teaching, that the world ever came to have any clear, distinct, and rational notions about a future state; notions every way agreeable to reason.

It is a confirmation that God designed the Christian religion should succeed the Jewish; that, speedily after the introduction of the Christian religion, God, in his providence, by the destruc-

tion of the temple, and dispersion of the Jewish nation, made that religion impracticable. It was prophesied of old, that God should be acknowledged and worshipped by other nations, and that other nations were to be God's people. Therefore, there was a religion to succeed the Jewish, very different as to external worship; because the Jewish religion was not fitted for more than a single nation: nor is it practicable by the world in general. But the Christian religion is exceedingly fitted for universal practice.

§ 27. There are these things remarkable in Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead, John xi; *viz.* that he called upon God, before he did it, to do it for him; and thanked him that he had heard him; and told him, that he knew that he heard him always: and when he spake to him he called him father; and told him that he spake to him for that end, that others that stood by, when they should see that what he asked of him, was granted in such an extraordinary thing, might believe that he sent him. Now, can it be imagined, that God would thus hear an impostor?

§ 28. It is an evidence that the apostles had their doctrine from inspiration of some invisible guide and instructer, that there was such a vast and apparent difference made in them at once after Pentecost. They were illiterate, simple, undesigning, ignorant men before; but afterward, how do they express themselves in their speeches and epistles! they do not speak as being in the least at a lost about the scheme of salvation, and the gospel mysteries. With what authority do they teach! and how learned and intelligent a manner! How came Saul by his scheme, and by all his knowledge of the christian doctrines and mysteries, immediately upon his conversion?

§ 29. Christ joined pardoning sins with his healing the sick. When one came to be healed, he first told him, that his sins were forgiven; and when the Jews found fault that he should pretend to forgive sins, then, immediately, he heals the person's disease, that they might believe that he had the power to forgive sins, and tells them that he does it for this end. Matth. ix. 2. Mark ii. 3. Luke v. 18. Now if Christ were an impostor, can it be believed, that God would so countenance such horrid blasphemy as this would be, to enable him to cure the disease by speaking a word, a work which God appropriates to himself as his own? Psal. ciii. 3. Would God give an impostor this attestation to a blasphemous lie, when he pretended to do it as an attestation to his divine mission?

§ 30. Christ by the works which he wrought, showed that he had an absolute and sovereign power over the course of nature, and over the spiritual and invisible world, and over the bodies and souls of men. It was not so with other prophets; they could not work what miracles they pleased, and when they

pleased. They could work miracles, only when they were excited and directed to it by a special command or impulse from heaven. But Christ wrought them as of his own power at all times. Men came to him, under the notion that he was able; and Christ required that they should believe in order to it; to which never any prophet pretended. Moses was shut out of the land of Canaan, partly for working a miracle in his own name, and not sanctifying the Lord God. "Must we fetch water out of this rock?" The prophets never pretended that they themselves had properly any power to work miracles; but disclaimed it. God never subjected the course of nature to them, to work miracles by their own word and command upon all occasions. Care was taken in all the miracles wrought by the prophets, that it should be visible, that what was done, was done only by God; and that what they said or did, upon which the miracle was wrought, was by particular revelation from heaven. They who came to Christ that he might work miracles for them, did it in the faith, that by his own power and holiness he was able to do it for them. The leper said, Matth. viii. 2, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He believed that Christ could work miracles, when he would. This Christ approved of, Matth. viii. 8. "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matth. ix. 18. "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thine hand on her, and she shall live. Matth. ix. 28. "Believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord." Matth. ix. 21. "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." In Matth. xvi. 9, Christ reproves his disciples, because they were afraid of wanting bread, not remembering how he had fed multitudes in the wilderness: which implies, that he was able to do the like again when he pleased. He cast out devils as of his own power and authority; Mark i. 27. "With authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." And Christ, as having power of his own to work miracles, gave power to his disciples, as Matth. x. Mark iii. 14, and vi. 7, &c. and Luke ix and x; and so miracles were wrought in Christ's name, by the apostles, and many other disciples. Moses did not in the least pretend to any such thing. But Christ did pretend, and he declares himself fellow with God in working; John v. 17. "My father worketh hitherto, and I work."

§ 31. If there must be a revelation, it is convincing, that the Christian revelation is the true one; that it has been by means of this revelation, and this only, that the world has come to the knowledge of the one only true God. Till this came, all the world lay in ignorance of him. But when this came, it was successful to bring the world to the acknowledgment of him. If there be a true revelation in the world, it is not to be suppo-

sed, that by a false one, an imposture, the world should come to the knowledge of the true God. If the Christian revelation be not the proper means to bring the world to the knowledge of the true God, it is strange that the world, which was before ignorant of him, should be brought to the knowledge of him by it; and no part of it ever be brought to the knowledge of him by any other means.

§ 32. It is an argument for the truth of the Christian revelation, that there is nothing else that informs us, what God designs by that series of revolutions and events that are brought to pass in the world; what end he seeks, and what scheme he has laid out; agreeably to the challenge which God makes to the gods, and prophets, and teachers of the heathen world, Isa. xli. 22, 23. It is most fit, that the intelligent beings of the world should be made acquainted with it. The thing that is God's great design, is something concerning them; and the revolutions by which it is to be brought to pass, are revolutions among them, and in their state. The state of the inanimate, unperceiving part of the world, is nothing regarded any otherwise, than in a subserviency to the perceiving and intelligent part. And it is most rational to suppose, that God should reveal the design he has been carrying on, to his rational creatures; that as God has made them capable of it, they may actively fall in with and promote it, acting herein as the subjects and friends of God.—The Christian revelation is a design most worthy of an infinitely wise, holy and perfect being.

§ 33. The doctrine of the general resurrection at the end of the world, upon many accounts, seems to me a most credible doctrine. There are a multitude of resemblances of it in nature and providence, which I doubt not, were designed to be types of it. It seems credible on this account, that the work of the Redeemer is wholly a restoring work from beginning to end; and that he would repair all the ruins brought on the world by sin.

§ 34. If the New Testament be not a divine revelation, then God never yet has given the world any clear revelation of a future state. But if a revelation be needful upon any account, it is that we may have some certain and distinct knowledge of the future invisible world. If God designed a true revelation, it is not probable that he would suffer that any false revelation should anticipate it, and do the work beforehand. And, upon many other accounts that might be mentioned, it is incredible that the true revelation should still be deferred.

§ 35. It is very unreasonable to make it an objection against the Christian revelation, that it contains some things that are very mysterious and difficult to our understandings, and that seem to us impossible. If God will give us a revelation from heaven of the very truth, concerning his own nature, acts, coun-

sels, and ways, and of the spiritual and invisible world; it is unreasonable to expect any other, than that many things in such a revelation should be utterly beyond our understanding. For was there ever a time, when, if there had been a revelation of the very truth in philosophical matters—concerning created things, which are of a vastly lower nature, and must be supposed more proportioned to our understandings—there would not have appeared many things, not only to the vulgar, but to the learned of that age, absurd and impossible? If many of those positions in philosophy, which are now received by the learned world as indubitable truths, had been revealed from heaven to be truths in past ages, they would have seemed as impossible as the most mysterious Christian doctrines do now. I believe, that if, even now, there should come a revelation from heaven of what is the very truth in these matters without deviating at all to accommodate it to our received notions and principles, there would be many things in it that would seem absurd and contradictory. I now receive principles as certain, which once, if they had been told me, I should have regarded as difficult as any mystery in the bible. Without doubt, much of the difficulty that we have about the doctrines of Christianity, arises from wrong principles that we receive. We find that those things which are received as principles in one age, and are never once questioned, are yet exploded in another age, as light increases. If God makes a revelation to us, he must reveal to us the truth as it is, without accommodating himself to our notions and principles; which would indeed be impossible: for those things which are our received notions in one age, are contrary to what are so in another; and the word of God was not given for any particular age, but for all ages. It surely becomes us to receive what God reveals to be truth, and to look upon his word as proof sufficient; whether what he reveals squares with our notions or not.

I rather wonder that the word of God contains no more mysteries in it; and I believe it is because God is so tender of us, and reveals only such things as he sees that man, though so weak a creature, if of an humble and an honest mind, can well enough bear. Such tenderness we see in Christ towards his disciples; he had many things to say, but forbore, because they could not bear them yet. Though God does not depart from truth to accomodate himself to our manner of thinking, yet I believe he accomodates himself to our way of understanding, in his manner of expressing and representing things, as we are wont to do, when teaching little children.

§ 36. What can be more reasonable, than to believe a man, when he tells us, that he is sent from God to heal the diseases of our souls, and, in order that we may believe him, heals all sorts of men, of all manner of diseases, by a touch.

or a word; and plainly shows that he can do it when he will, and let the disease be what it will? He tells us, that he will deliver us from spiritual and eternal death; that he will raise us from the dead, and give us eternal life; so that we shall live for ever, and not die; and to prove this, he gives evidence that he has power over men's lives, by restoring them after they are dead; and rises from the dead himself. He tells us, that he will bestow heavenly glory upon us; and will translate us to heaven; and, to confirm us in this belief, tells us, that we shall see himself, after his death, ascend into heaven. What more could we desire? He tells us that he will undertake for us, and appear for us before God; and that we need not doubt, if he pleads for us, he shall procure acceptance, and, that we may see that it is true, he asks of God concerning a man who had been dead four days, that he may come to life again; and tells God, that he asks it for this end, that we may see that he always hears him, and grants what he requests; and accordingly, at his request, the dead man comes to life.

§ 37. "What argument more proper (says Dr. Tillotson) to convince them of another life after this, than to see a man raised from the dead and restored to a new life? What fitter to satisfy a man concerning heaven and the happy state of those there, than to see one visible taken up into heaven? And what more fit to assure us that the promises of the gospel are real, and shall be made good to us, than to see him who made those promises to us, raise himself from the dead, and go up into heaven, and from thence dispense miraculous gifts abroad in the world, as evidences of the power and authority with which he is invested? All the philosophical arguments which a man can bring for the soul's immortality and another life, will have no force upon vulgar apprehensions, in comparison of these sensible demonstrations, which give an experiment of the thing, and furnish us with an instance of something of the same kind, and of equal difficulty with that which is propounded to our belief."

§ 38. Why was not Christ, after he rose from the dead, during his stay upon earth, with his disciples, as he was before? The very different states that Christ and his disciples were now in, would not allow of it. Christ, before his death, while in his humiliation, was in a like state with them. He was subject to hunger and thirst, as they were; he needed sleep as they did; he needed the like defence from the weather that they did, and the like: but when he was risen from the dead, the case was exceedingly altered; he then began his exaltation. He put off mortality, and all the infirmities of his body. The nature of his body was different from theirs, as things celestial differ from things terrestrial. Mortal beings are not apt for a cohabitation with immortal: nor terrestrial

with celestial; nor corruption with incorruption. God will not thus mix and confound heaven and earth.

§ 39. Much of the scriptures is apt to seem insipid to us now, as though there were no greater matter of instruction in it; because the points of instruction most plainly contained in it, are old to us, and what we have been taught from our infancy. The doctrines are so plain to us now, that there seems to have been no need of a particular revelation of such things; especially of insisting upon them so much. But how exceedingly different would it have seemed if we had lived in those times when the revelation was given, when the things were in a great measure new, at least as to that distinctness and expressiveness of their revelation? If we had an idea of the state of the world, when God gave the revelation, they would appear glorious instructions, bringing great light into the world, and most worthy of God.

§ 40. It was not allowed under the Old Testament, to hate personal enemies, to wish for revenge, or to pray for their hurt; except as speaking in the name of the Lord. So that there is no inconsistence between the religion of the Old Testament and New, in this respect. The apostle Paul himself doth thus imprecate vengeance on his enemies; 2 Tim. iv. 14. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works." Revenge, or a desire of it, was forbidden by the law of Moses, Levit. xix. 18; yea, there, the love of our enemy is implicitly commanded. Doing good to enemies, is required, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou seest the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." And this was agreeable to the sense of the saints of those times, as appears from Job xxxi. 29. "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him." Prov. xxiv. 17. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, nor let thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." And xvii. 5. "He that is glad at calamities, shall not go unpunished." We cannot think that those imprecations we find in the Psalms and Prophets, were out of their own hearts; for cursing is spoken of as a very dreadful sin in the Old Testament; and David, whom we hear oftener than any other praying for vengeance on his enemies, by the history of his life, was of a spirit very remote from spiteful and revengeful. He himself in the Psalms gives us an account of his wishing well to his enemies, and doing good to them, Psalm vii. 4; praying for them, and grieving at their calamities, Psalm xxxv. 13, 14. And some of the most terrible imprecations that we find in all the Old Testament, are in the New spoken of as prophetical, even those in the 109th Psalm; as in Acts i. 20. Jer.

xii. 3. We have instances of this kind even in the apostles and the disciples of the Lamb of God, as 2 Tim. iv. 14. Peter says to Simon Magus, "Thy money perish with thee." They wish them ill, not as personal, but as public enemies to the church of God. Sometimes what they say is in the name of the church, see Jer. v. 34, 35; Matt. i. 19. "Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." This is a remarkable and eminent instance of a Christian spirit; and this verse is an evidence, that *that* meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, and kindness to enemies which the Gospel prescribes, were duties under the law, and before Christ came.

§ 41. I once told a boy of about thirteen years of age, that a piece of any matter two inches square, was eight times as large as one of but one inch square; or that it might be cut into eight pieces, all of them as big as that of but one inch square. He seemed at first not to think me in earnest, and to suspect that I only meant to make game of him. But when I had taken considerable pains to convince him that I was in earnest, and that I knew what I said to be true; he seemed to be astonished at my positiveness, and exclaimed about the impossibility and absurdity of it; and would argue, how was it possible for two inches to be eight inches! and all that I could say, did not prevail upon him to make him believe it. I suppose it seemed to him as great a contradiction, that what was but just twice so long, and twice so broad, and twice so thick, should yet be eight times so big; as that twice one should make eight, or any other absurdity whatsoever. And when I afterward showed him the truth of it, by cutting out two cubes, one an inch, and another two inches square; and let him examine the measures, and see that the measures were exact, and that there was no deceit; and cut the two inch cube into eight equal parts, and he counted the parts over and over, and took the parts one by one, and compared them with the one inch cube, and spent some time in counting and comparing; he seemed to be astonished, as though there were some witchcraft in the case; and hardly to believe it after all. For he did not yet at all see the reason of it. I believe it was a much more difficult mystery to him, than the Trinity ordinarily is to men; and seemed to him more evidently a contradiction, than any mystery of religion to a Socinian or Deist.

§ 42. Some may be ready to object against the Christian religion, that there seem to be innumerable difficulties, and inconsistencies attending it, but that a multitude of heads have been employed by many ages, till at length such solutions have been found out for many of them, as are in some measure plausible.

To this I answer, That as there has been a long time to answer objections, so there has been a long time to strengthen them. As there have been many ages to solve difficulties, so there have been as many to find out difficulties and inconsistencies. Besides, there has been all this time to make difficulties more plain, and bring out inconsistencies more to the light; and by thorough and exact consideration, to make them more manifest and apparent. Time wonderfully brings truth to light, and wears off by degrees false colourings and disguises. The truth will always have most advantage by time. Appearing inconsistencies being well founded, will grow plainer and plainer, and difficulties more and more evident. Time will discover more circumstances to strengthen and confirm them, and so pretences of solution will appear more and more evidently absurd and ridiculous. When parties contend by argument and inquiry, time greatly helps that party which has truth on its side, and weakens the contrary. It gradually wears away the sandy foundation, and rots away the building that is not made of substantial materials. The Christian religion has evermore, in all ages, had its enemies, and that among learned men. Yea, it is observable, that there have commonly been some of the most subtle of men to scan the Christian scheme, and to discover the objections that lie against it, and have done it with a good will to overthrow it.—Thus it was in Judea, in the infancy of the church. The Scribes and Pharisees, and the wise men among the Jews, employed all their wisdom against it. Thus, in the first ages of the church, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called. Christianity had the wisdom, learning, and subtlety of the world to oppose it. In latter ages, how many learned and subtle men have done their utmost against Christianity? So that the length of time for persons to strengthen their own side in this controversy, brought as an objection against Christianity, is much more an argument for it, than an objection against it.

§ 43. If there be a revelation from God to the world, it is most reasonable to suppose, and natural to expect, that he should therein make known not only what manner of being he is, but also that he should lead mankind to an understanding of his works of creation and providence. These things the Christian revelation opens to us in such a manner as might be expected. This alone gives any tolerable account of the work of creation, and this reveals to us the scheme of providence, and what is God's main design in the whole, a design worthy of himself. And we are shown how these events all point to this main work of power, wisdom and grace. We have a particular account how this greatest work has actually been wrought in the fulness of time, as to those great acts which are the main

ground of it; and how that was foretold in the several ages of the world.

These things are exceedingly agreeable to a rational supposition, in case God makes a revelation to mankind. But if the scriptures are not a revelation of God, then man, the principal creature God has made in this world, the only intelligent creature, to whom he has subjected this lower part of the creation, is left wholly and entirely in the dark about God's works both of creation and providence, and has nothing whereby to judge what God's scheme is, in all the great changes he sees come to pass in the world, or what he aims to accomplish. Every thing lies in darkness and confusion before him, without any possibility of his determining any thing, or to direct him what to think of God's works which he beholds, or what affections he should exercise towards the Supreme Governor, on occasion of them.

CHAPTER II.

The objection concerning the Apostles' apprehensions of the second coming of Christ answered.

§ 1. With respect to that objection against the truth of the Christian religion, That the apostles seem often to speak of the coming of Christ to judgment, as if they thought it near at hand; I will begin with what the apostle Paul says that may have such appearance. In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, which is reckoned to be the first of his epistles in the order of time; and particularly chap. iv. 15—17, he says, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive*, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then *we which are alive and remain*, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." He speaks of those that should then be alive, in the first person plural; and of those that should be asleep, in the third person. Thus it would have been more natural for him to have said, They which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent *us*, who shall then be asleep.—And in the 17th verse, Then they which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with *us*.

§ 2. Considering the scope of the apostle in these verses, all that can be inferred from such a manner of speaking, is, that it might, for ought was then revealed, be while they lived.

For the scope of the apostle was to comfort the Thessalonians concerning their friends that were already dead, with the consideration, that they should surely meet them again, at the day of the Lord's coming. And therefore, it was most proper and natural for the apostle to speak of them in the third person. And it is but just to suppose, that it was only the uncertainty of the time, that was the ground of the apostle's using such a manner of expression; because he, in this very context, speaks of the time as altogether uncertain; as it follows immediately in the beginning of the next chapter. "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," &c. The apostle, by the expression he uses, probably had in his mind those words of Christ in Acts i. 7. "It is not for you to know the *times and seasons*, which the Father hath put in his own power."

§ 3. We have an instance of a like nature with this, in the words of Joseph to his brethren. Gen. l. 25. "God will surely visit *you*, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." He does not say, God shall visit your *posterity*, and *they* shall carry up my bones from hence. Yet it cannot be argued, that Joseph concluded that the redemption out of Egypt, would be in that generation.

So the nature and design of the apostle's discourse, necessarily gave him to distinguish between those that should be alive at Christ's coming, and the deceased relations of the Christian Thessalonians. He speaks of them as already dead, and of their now living friends then meeting them risen from the dead.—That the apostle did not intend to be understood, as though it were certain that Christ would come while they were living; is evident, from what he himself says, speaking of those very words, and expressly denying that he intended any such thing; or that he supposed it to be certain, that the coming of Christ was at hand, in any such sense. See 2 Thess. ii. 1—3; where he very earnestly warns them not to understand him in any such sense. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," &c.

§ 5. Now it is evident, that the apostle does not thus write to them the *second* time, endeavouring to retract any thing he had written before; but it must be because he really did not intend so at first; for this epistle was written soon after the other, while the same fellow-labourers were with him.—And both

have been supposed to be written while the apostle abode in Athens, as appears by the postcripts. And if we well observe the contents of this and the foregoing epistle, the principal occasion of the apostle's writing the second so soon after the other, seems to have been an information he had received, that his former epistle had been misunderstood in this particular: and being much concerned about it, and fearing the ill consequences of such a misunderstanding, he writes to guard them from the mischief of such a mistake, and to establish them in it, that it is uncertain when the Lord will come, as he had told them before in his other epistle. And he argues the great uncertainty there was, whether it would be in that age or not, from what the Holy Ghost had revealed about the coming of antichrist.

§ 6. That this apostle did not expect Christ's coming in that generation, may be argued from his speaking as though he expected that those that were then alive, would *rise from the dead* at Christ's second coming, as in 1 Cor. vi. 14. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also *raise up us* by his own power." And 2 Cor. iv. 14. "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall *raise up us* also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

§ 7. From what the apostle says in this second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, there appears a *necessity*, that those passages in any other of his epistles, that look as though he expected that Christ would come in that age, should be understood in some other sense, and that the apostle really did not mean so, as his words on a cursory view would lead us to suppose. For here the apostle is very express, and full, and earnest in it, that he would by no means be so understood. It is a further evidence, that those passages in other epistles must be understood in some other sense, that there are passages in this very epistle, particularly in the first chapter, that we should be ready to think had such a look, were it not that the apostle himself, immediately in the second chapter, denies any such meaning.

§ 8. In this sense we must understand those passages, in which it is spoken of as a duty of Christians, to look and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus; as, Titus ii. 13. 1 Cor. i. 7. Philip. iii. 20. There is a necessity of understanding, in like manner, the following passages—which were all written after this to the Thessalonians—Rom. xiii. 11, 12. "And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent; *the day is at hand.* Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." We cannot understand this as though the apostle concluded, the day of judgment would come while they lived; because

he had before explained himself otherwise: but only that the day of Christ's kingdom, which is the day of the salvation of the church of Christ, was at hand. And so Philip. iv. 5. "Let your moderation be known to all men: *the Lord is at hand.*" And Heb. x. 25. "Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see *the day approaching.*"

§ 9. Christ's coming was indeed at hand in many respects; and in such respects as might well have all that influence upon those to whom the apostle wrote that he intended. The coming of Christ at the overthrow of the Heathen empire, might well be said to be at hand; and Christ's last coming to judgment, might well, considering all things, be said to be at hand, as the apostle Peter observes, though there should be thousands of years between. The apostle Paul speaks of ages to come, Eph. ii. 7. That it was not to be till many generations were past: yet it was at hand, in a sense agreeable to the common language of the Holy Spirit. So, Christ's first coming was spoken of as very nigh at hand, of old. Hagg. ii. 6, 7. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, *it is a little while*, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts:" Yet there was then above 500 years to it. And when it was about 400 years, it is said, Mal. iii. 1, "The Lord whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." And when it was about 700 years to the gospel day, it is said to be but *a very little while.* Isai. xxxix. 17, 18. "It is not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." So God represents, as though he would *very quickly* perform all things prophesied of by Jeremiah, some of them were not to be fulfilled in many ages; Jer. i. 10—12. So the time is said to be *at hand*, for the accomplishment of all the prophecies of the book of Revelation, and Christ's last coming at the conclusion of them; Rev. i. 3. and xxii. 7, 10, 12, 20; though the book evidently contains a series of events for many ages.

§ 10. Again, when the apostle Peter says, with respect to Christ's last coming, and its being said to be *at hand*, that "a thousand years in God's sight are but as one day," it is no new conceit of his own, to save reputation; but God's language that he had used of old justifies him in so saying. And the expression that the apostles used about the approach of Christ's coming, did not tend to the disappointment of God's people. For Christ's coming to reward them at death was at hand, when they should have such a comfortable and full prospect of their

complete reward at Christ's last coming; so that they shall anticipate, and as it were have a possession of it. Though the time appears long to us in our dim-sighted state, yet it will appear as nothing to them. The second coming of Christ was so nigh at hand, that the church of God might well take all that comfort from what was really to be understood by those expressions. The first coming of Christ was very often spoken of for the comfort of the saints of the Old Testament, under great afflictions, though they were never like to see it in this life-time. So in the case of Zerubbabel, and Joshua and Daniel.

§ 11. As to that text of the apostle in 1 Cor. x. 11, "And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends of the worlds* are come;" the connexion of these words with the context, and the drift of the apostle, explain his meaning. For his drift is only this, that what had happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness, happened to them for ensamples, and were written for our sakes, though they happened so long ago, or though we live so long after them, and with respect to them, in the ends of the world, or in the latter part of the world's duration, called the latter days.

§ 12. As to 1 Pet. iv. 7, "The end of all things is *at hand:*" how did this same apostle explain this propinquity? 2 Peter iii. 7, 8. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And it is to be considered, that the apostle Peter was under no temptation to change his voice in this matter, from any experience of the events failing as yet. He had not lived long enough to prove, but that Christ's words—whence any may suppose they might expect Christ's second coming before the generation passed away, and before some that were then present should taste death—might be fulfilled in that sense.

§ 13. That there was no such notion prevailing among the disciples, that Christ should come while most of them lived, is manifest from this, that when the disciples mistook the design of Christ's word, John xxi. 22, "If I will that he tarry till I Come, what is that to thee?" and from thence, for a while, entertained a notion that that disciple was not to die till Christ came; it seems they, even while under this mistake, looked upon it as the distinguishing privilege of that disciple, which none of the rest were to expect. And it is evident, that John himself concluded no such thing, as that Christ should come in his life-time, because he speaks of that notion of the other disciples about him as ill-founded.

§ 14. It is a further argument, that when the apostles used such kind of language as that, "the Lord is at hand," &c. they

did not use it in any such sense, as that it should be in that age or the next; that the apostle John, who was accustomed to their language, uses it still, even after he had prophesied of many great events, which plainly were to have their accomplishment in many successive ages; as Rev. iii. 11. "Behold, I come *quickly*." And he uses it repeatedly at the end of the book, after he had given an account of those future events, in the last chapter, ver. 7. "Behold, I come *quickly*;" ver. 12. "Behold, I come *quickly*;" and ver. 20. "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come *quickly*." The 17th chapter of this book alone, is sufficient to convince any one, that John could not suppose that his prophecies could be fulfilled but in several successive ages.

§ 15. It is an argument, that such a nearness of Christ's last coming as the objection supposes was not the doctrine that the apostles so much insisted upon; that the church prevailed still, when they saw that Christ did not come. Such a disappointment would have been a dreadful blow to Christianity, if this had been the universal expectation of Christians, and it had been raised by the abundant promises of Christ and his apostles. They probably, upon it, would have exceedingly lost ground, and shrunk away. But the fact was very much the contrary.

§ 16. Christ often speaks of his last coming, as that which would be long delayed; Matth. xxv. 5. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept" Luke xx. 9. "A certain man planted a vineyard;" ver. 19. "After *a long time*, the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." Matth. xxiv. 48. "My Lord delayeth his coming." So Luke xvii. 22.

§ 17. It is evident, that when Christ speaks of his coming; of his being revealed; of his coming in his kingdom, or his kingdom coming; he has respect to his appearing in those great works of his power, justice, and grace, which should be in the destruction of Jerusalem, and other extraordinary providences which should attend it. So in Luke xvii. 22, to the end, with chap. xviii. 1—8, Christ speaks of *the kingdom of God coming; of the coming of the days of the Son of man; of the Son of man being revealed;* and of *the Son of man coming*. But yet, it is evident he has respect to the destruction of Jerusalem, by chap. xvii. 37. "And they answered and said unto him, Where Lord? and he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." See also chap. xix. 13—15. So when the disciple had been observing the magnificence of the temple, and Christ had said to them, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,"—having respect to the destruction of Jerusalem—the disciples asked him when these things should be? and what should be the signs of his coming, and of the

end of the world? By Christ's coming, they have plainly a respect to that time of the destruction of the temple, which Christ had spoken of; and therefore, their question is thus expressed by St. Mark, chap. xiii. 4. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" And in like manner by St. Luke, chap. xxi. 7; and Christ has many things in his answer agreeable to this sense of this question. He warns them to beware of others that should come in his stead, Matth. xxiv. 4, 5. Then he proceeds to tell them what will precede the *end*, i. e. the end of the world, which the disciples inquired after, and tells them what shall be signs of its approach; Matth. xxiv. 6—16. And then speaks of the desolation of Jerusalem, and of the land, as that *end* and that coming of his which they inquired after; Matth. xxiv. 15—21, 28: and more plainly, Luke xxi. 20—24.

From these things, it follows,

§ 18. That when Christ speaks of his coming, his coming in his kingdom, &c. as being in *that generation*, and before some who were then alive should taste of death, there is no need of understanding him of his coming to the *last judgment*; but it may well be understood of his coming at the *destruction of Jerusalem*, which, as has been shown, he calls by these names, and which he also distinguishes from his coming to the last judgment, and consummation of all things. Yea,

§ 19. It is evident, that he did not suppose his coming to the last judgment, and the consummation of all things, would be till a long time after the destruction of Jerusalem. The calling of the Gentiles, instead of the Jews, is spoken of as what should be principally after the destruction of Jerusalem; Matth. xxi. 41, 43; Luke xx. 15, 16; Matth. xxii. 7—10. But this, Christ himself speaks of as a gradual work in the parables of the grain and mustard seed, and of the leaven hid in three measures of meal; Matth. xiii. 31—33; Luke xiii. 19—21; Mark iv. 26—32. And it is very manifest, that Christ did not suppose the consummation of all things to take place, till long after the destruction of Jerusalem, Luke xxi. 24; where it is said of the Jews, that they should be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

CHAPTER III.

Jesus's prophecies, a proof that he was the Christ, and a divine person.

§ 1. As Christ wrought miracles in a very different manner from the prophets, acting therein in his own name, and as doing what he did of his own power and will: so, also, he uttered prophecies in a way very diverse from that of the ancient prophets. The ancient prophets, when they uttered their predictions, were wont to introduce them after this manner, *Hear ye the word of the Lord;* or, *Thus saith the Lord;* showing, that they did not speak of their own knowledge, but by special revelation and direction from God. Christ foretold things to come in a remarkably different manner and style, introducing his predictions, not with a *Thus saith the Lord*, but, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, as Matth. xxiii. 36; xxiv. 34, 45; xxvi. 13, and 21; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxi. 31, 32; John xiii. 38; xiv. 12; xvi. 20, 21, 22. The following place is very remarkable, showing what great authority Christ attributed to his own word in his predictions, Matth. xxiv. 34, 35. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away." These words are annexed to the chief prophecies that Christ ever uttered, which are contained in the 24th chapter of Matthew. See the same, Luke xxi. 31, 32.

§ 2. Christ foretold future events, and those to be accomplished after his death, not only as what he knew by his own knowledge, but what he himself would bring to pass, both future blessings to his church and people, and future calamity and destruction to those persons and people that were his enemies.—

§ 3. *First.* He foretold great events for the *benefit* of his church, that he would bring to pass; John xiv. 12, 13, 14. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." John xvi. 7—11. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. For, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, *I will send him unto you.* And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judg-

ment, because the prince of this world is judged." And ver. 20, 21, 22. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful. But your sorrow shall be turned into joy. And ye now therefore, have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you" See the whole of the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John: and Luke xxi. 15—18. "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death: and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish." Luke xxiv. 49. "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." So he foretold his own resurrection from the dead, as what he himself would bring to pass by his own power; John ii. 19. "Destroy this temple, and, in three days, I will raise it up:" John x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Mark xvi. 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

§ 4. *Secondly*, He foretold many great events, implying awful calamity and destruction to his enemies, as what he himself would bring to pass. Thus he speaks of that mighty destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans, as that from which he would have protected them, if they had believed on him; Matth. xxiii. 36, 37, 38. "Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come on this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." This destruction is spoken of as what he would bring upon them, as a punishment for their rejection and contempt of him. Luke xix. 12, 13, 14. "He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us." With verse 27. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me."

§ 5. Christ not only foretold things future, as having ability in himself to accomplish them, but he promised to *give others ability* to foretel future events by his Spirit, and hereby should honour him, as having, in his foreknowledge of future things, the same honour with the Father. John xvi. 7. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. But if I depart I will send him unto you." Verse 13, 14, 15. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine. Therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

§ 6. It is observable, that never any prophet gave such great and manifold opportunity for proof and trial, whether he was a true prophet or not, in the multitude of predictions of events to be fulfilled in his life-time, and during that generation after his death; and also in the plainness of his predictions; most of them being delivered, not in visionary, mystical representations, but in a manner intelligible to all.

§ 7. Therefore, the supposition, that if Christ were an impostor, God would so order it, that all these predictions—many of them so strange and wonderful, and in themselves so exceedingly unlikely—should exactly come to pass; and that God's providence should so wonderfully confirm his words, beyond those of any other prophet that ever had been in the world is extremely unreasonable; especially considering the following things:

§ 8. 1*st*. That God had of old given this as a sign, by which his people might know a true prophet: *viz*. the coming to pass of the things foretold by him. And this rule is annexed by Moses to that great promise, which God gave of the Messiah, Deut. xviii. 15, &c. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; neither let me see this great fire any more that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods; even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet

speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass; that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously. Thou shalt not be afraid of him."—Now, therefore, since Jesus professed to be the Messiah, and the great Prophet foretold and promised by God in this place, and uttered so many great and wonderful prophecies; it might be expected, if he was a mere pretender, and spake presumptuously, and uttered what the Lord had not spoken, that God should not have confirmed his prophecies, in his providence; but, in that case, would have given his people opportunity to refute, by this rule, his pretences.

§ 9. 2*d*. That foretelling future events, is spoken of by God, as one great thing wherein the Messiah should differ from the false gods and fals prophets, and vain pretenders of the Heathens. In that great prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah, beginning with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah to the end of the book, the foretelling of future events, in such a manner as to show, that the person who foretels, does foresee, and has a view of futurity, is often mentioned as a divine prerogative, and therefore as a good evidence, that he that does so is a divine person, or speaks by divine authority. Therefore the prophets and gods of the Heathens, are often challenged on this head, and the proof of their authority often put upon this issue; Isaiah xli. 21—28; xlii. 8, 9; xliii. 9—12; xliv. 6—8; xlv. 3. and 21; xlvi. 10; xlviii. 14.—In this prophecy it is declared, that herein the Messiah should differ from all vain pretenders; (see chap. xli. 27; and xlii. at the beginning; compared with chap. xli. 21—29.) Now, therefore, is it credible, that God would so order it, that one who falsely pretended to be the Messiah, should, in so high a degree, have this honour, which God had mentioned as the great and distinguishing honour which he would put on the true Messiah, as his Elect, in whom his soul delighted?

§ 10. 3*d*. That the foretelling of future events, as by his own knowledge, and as events that are to be accomplished by his own power, is spoken of by God, as his great prerogative, and as a good and sure evidence of the divinity of the person who can do thus; and God speaks thus, in those very places in which he is foretelling the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah xli. 21—23. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and show us what shall happen: Show the things that are to come hereafter, *that we may know that ye are Gods*." Verse 26. "Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know, and before time, that we may say, he is righteous? Yea, there is none that showeth; yea, there is none that declareth; yea, there is none that heareth your words." Then, in the next words, God promises the Messiah.

Verse 27: "The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them; and I will give to Jerusalem, one that bringeth good tidings;" *i. e.* that foreshows glorious future things which God is about to do for his people.

§ 11. Therefore, since God mentions the foretelling of future events in this manner, as a certain note of divinity, and a distinguishing honour that he would put on the Messiah, his elect in whom his soul delighteth; is it *credible*, that God would put this honour, in so great a degree, on one who falsely pretended to be the Messiah, and the beloved of God? And especially, when he pretended, in this respect, to have the same honour which belongs to God; as John xvi. 13—15. "He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine: Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." He, also, speaks of his knowledge of divine secrets, and future events, as the effect of the peculiar love that God had to him; John v. 20. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth."

§ 12. Great changes in kingdoms and nations, coming to pass according to God's predictions, is often spoken of by God himself as a great evidence of his being the only true God. The foretelling of the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, is greatly insisted on by God, as a great evidence of his being the true God, and as most clearly and greatly distinguishing him from all pretenders to divinity. See chap. xli. 21—27; see, also, chap. xliv. 25. to the end, and xlvi. 10. But Jesus was one that professed divinity, and foretold revolutions of nations as great and strange as this, yea, far more wonderful. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which had been the holy city, and of the nation of Jews, who had been God's own people, and whose protector he had in a special manner been, and towards whom he exercised a most peculiar providence. He also foretold the deliverance of the Christians who were in Jerusalem. It was a greater thing, and less to be expected, that such a city and such a nation should be destroyed, than that destruction should befal a nation of aliens. Therefore, to foretel this destruction, with the various circumstances of it, as they actually took place, is a greater evidence of divine foreknowledge, than to foretel the destruction of a nation of aliens.

§ 13. The turning of the wilderness into a fruitful field, is spoken of by God as a peculiar work of God, and a certain sign of a divine hand; Isaiah xli. 18, 19, 20. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the

Shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree. I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this." It is evident, this is not intended in a literal sense, but signifies the happy change in the state of mankind, from a state wherein men are represented as barren, as briars and thorns, and as wild beasts, to a morally excellent and happy state. This might be proved, by the frequent use of such figures in the prophecies of scripture. But it is manifest, that this, according to Christ's prediction, was effected, in a remarkable manner, by Christ himself, and his apostles and followers, in the turning of the world from heathenism, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, to just apprehensions of his moral government, and from all manner of vice to virtue.

§ 14. It is remarkable, that it is foretold, Isaiah xlii. that the Messiah should set judgment in the earth, and his law or religion among the nations, particularly *the isles*, or Europe, against strong opposition, and through great sufferings, under which his church should seem ready to be extinguished, or crushed, like smoking flax, or a bruised reed; but that, finally, judgment should be brought forth to victory.

CHAPTER IV.

The propriety of a general judgment, and a future state.

§ 1. The doctrine taught in the scriptures, that at the end of the world all mankind shall stand together before the judgment-seat of the supreme Lawgiver and Judge, to have all things visibly set to rights—and justice made visibly to take place with respect to all the persons, actions, and affairs of the moral world, by the infinitely wise, holy, and just Head of it—is a most *reasonable* doctrine, and much commends itself to our belief, from the reason of the thing, on the supposition of a moral government maintained over the world by Him who created it. For this implies, that he governs the world as its lawgiver and judge, and will treat men as accountable creatures. God's moral government not only requires, that there should be divine laws, and an execution of them in rewards and punishments, but, also, that both should be made *visible*. It is requisite, that the subject should have proper means of knowing what the laws are, by which he is obligated, and the grounds of the obligation; and that others, who are his fellow-subjects, should also know his obligations. For, as men are made to dwell in society, this cannot well be, without knowing each other's obligations, and being able to judge of the good

or evil of each other's actions. It is likewise requisite, that the subject of the laws, should have proper means of knowing the grounds of the rewards or punishments of which he is the subject, in the execution of the laws; and that it should be made manifest, to the conscience of him who is rewarded or punished, what he is rewarded or punished for, and the ground on which the Judge assigns such a retribution: and, if he see others punished or acquitted, that the ground of it should be manifested to him, that he may see the justice of it. That there should be some judicial proceeding in which that should take place, seems absolutely necessary, in order to a proper manifestation of the grounds of the subject's reward or punishment, and a display of the justice of his judge to his own conscience; which must be, if the subject be dealt with as a rational moral agent.

§ 2. Hence it is of necessity, that every one of mankind must be the subject of such a dispensation of God towards him, which may fitly be called an appearing before the judgment-seat of God. And it is most reasonable to suppose, that this judicial proceeding will not be secret; that each individual will not be judged so, that the transaction with respect to him will be out of the sight and knowledge of all others; but that truth and righteousness will be made visibly to take place, after a prevalence of wrong, wickedness, and confusion, in the violations of a divine law, which was public, and the law of their union and regulation in society: many of those violations are, of course, visible to others, and others are concerned in them, either in being united in the wickedness, and accessary to it, or a party concerned in suffering the injury done by that wickedness.

§ 3. Reasonable creatures are the eye of the world; they are capable of beholding the beauty and excellency of the Creator's workmanship, and those displays of himself, which he has made in his works; and, therefore, it is requisite, that the beauty and excellency of the world, as God hath constituted it, should not be hid or kept secret. But the beauty of God's constitution of the world, consists mainly, without doubt, in the intelligent part of the world, which is the head and end of all the rest, *et instar omnium.* But the beauty and order of God's constitution of this, consists chiefly in his moral regulation of it. Now, therefore, since God has made the beauty and regularity of the natural world, so publicly visible to all; it is much more requisite, that the moral beauty and regularity of his disposals in the intelligent world, should be publicly visible. For the beauty of God's works, consists a thousand times more in this, than in the other. It is reasonable to suppose, that these will be as publicly visible as the brightness and beautiful order and motions of the heavenly bodies, and the

regular successions of the various seasons of the year, and the beauties of nature in the air, and on the face of the earth. The moral deformity and confusion of the world, is most public; it stands forth continually in view through all ages. It is, therefore, fit, that the rectifying of this deformity and disorder, and the bringing of light out of darkness, should also be made publicly visible to those creatures, that are made to be the eye of the creation, to behold its beauty, and the glory of the Creator in it. God has given man a nature, which, if it be under the influence of true virtue, desires, above all things, to behold this kind of order and beauty. When man sees a great and horrid crime committed, as some nefarious act of injustice, cruelty, &c., the nature of the reasonable creature has something in it, which desires and makes it requisite, that he should see justice done, and right take place, with respect to such an act. The mind, or heart, as it were, fails in such a case, if it neither sees this, nor hopes to see it.

§ 4. If it be requisite that judgment should be public, and that many should stand together before the judgment-seat; on the same account, it will appear most reasonable to suppose, that the whole world should appear together in one great assembly, before the judgment-seat. The whole world is one commonwealth and kingdom, all made of one blood, all under one moral head, one law, and one government; and all parts of it are joined in communication one with another. All are sinners, and yet God appears placable to all, &c. All dwell in one habitation, *viz.* this earth, under the same roof of the visible heavens, having the same sun to enlighten them, &c. Besides, many of the causes and controversies to be decided by the supreme Judge of the world, are of the most public nature; as causes between princes and heads of great kingdoms and monarchies, and their people; and causes between one nation and another. Yea, there are many causes which the supreme Judge must bring to an issue, wherein the greater part of the world is concerned. And when the cause and controversy between these two is judged, it is requisite that both parties should appear together before the judgment-seat. The Roman emperors had to do with other nations that were without the limits of the empire, to the utmost ends of the earth; as with the Scythians, the Persians, the Arabians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Germans, Cimbrians, and Africans. So that it is requisite when they appear to be judged, that not only the people of the Roman empire should appear with them, but also those other nations. Thus all the nations of Europe have dealings one with another continually; and these European nations have some dealings with almost all other nations upon earth, in Asia, Africa, and America.

§ 5. It is therefore necessary, that all nations should be gathered together before the judgment-seat of the supreme Lawgiver and Judge, that he may determine between them, and settle all things by his wise, righteous, and infallible decision. And many of the good and evil acts that are done, though the world is not properly concerned in them as a party interested, yet are public through the world. They are done in the sight of the world, and greatly draw the attention of mankind. It is fit, therefore, that they should be as publicly judged. And, it is to be observed, that the longer the world stands, the more and more communication have the different parts of it together. So that, at the end of the world, there probably will be the highest reason, in this respect, that all nations that shall then be found upon the earth, should be called together before the judgment-seat of God.

§ 6. As it is requisite, that all who dwell on the face of the earth at the same time, should appear together before the judgment-seat; so it is also requisite, that all generations that have succeeded one another, appear together. Many of the moral acts, both good and bad, not only are public in this respect, that they are known over great part of the face of the earth, in or near the time of them but also they are made public to all the following generations, by tradition and history. And if the actions of one generation be not visible to all, yet the actions of one generation are very visible to the generation immediately following, and theirs to the next; and so all, in this sense, are very visible one to another. And as all nations of the world are morally concerned one with another, though not so as each one immediately concerned with every other nation; yet all are mutually concerned by concatenation.—One nation is concerned with the next, and that with the next, and so on: so that there is need that all such should appear together to be judged.

§ 7. All generations of men from the beginning to the end of the world, are morally concerned one with another. The first generation is concerned with the next, and that with the next, and so on to the end of the world. Therefore it is requisite, that all should appear together to be judged. Parents may injure their children, and children may injure their parents; and so they are two parties in one cause, which must be decided by the supreme Judge. Therefore, it is needful, that they, as parties, should appear together, when their cause is judged. Parents and children, or a younger generation and an older, may be accessary to each other's crimes, or united in each other's virtuous deeds; and therefore it is requisite that they should be judged together. Yea, the present generation may become accessary to an injury committed by their ancestors ages ago.

For, in many things. they stand in the stead of those ancestors, and act for them and have power to continue the injury, or to remove it.

§ 8. Posterity is concerned in the actions of their ancestors or predecessors, in families, nations, and most communities of men, as standing in some respect in their stead. And some particular persons may injure, not only a great part of the world contemporary with them, but may injure and undo all future generations of many individuals, families, or larger communities. So that men who live now, may have an action against those who lived a thousand years ago: or there may be a cause which needs to be decided by the Judge of the world, between some of the present generation, and some who lived a thousand years ago. Princes who, by rapine and cruelty, ruin nations, are answerable for the poverty, slavery, and misery of the posterity of those nations. So, as to those who broach and established opinions and principles, which tend to the overthrow of virtue, and propagation of vice, and are contrary to the common rights and privileges of mankind. Thus, Mahomet has injured all succeeding posterity, and is answerable, at least in a degree, for the ruin of the virtue of his followers in many respects, and for the rapine, violence, and terrible devastations which his followers have been guilty of toward the nations of the world, and to which they have been instigated by the principles which he taught them. And, whoever they were, who first drew away men from the true religion, and introduced and established idolatry, they have injured all nations that have to this day partaken of the infection.

§ 9. In like manner, persons, by their virtue, may be great benefactors to mankind, through all succeeding generations. Without doubt, the apostle Paul, and others who assisted him, and following generations, may properly become the subjects of a judicial proceeding, with respect to that great religious change and revolution in the nations subject to the Roman empire, in abolishing Heathenish idolatry, and setting up Christianity in the room of it.

§ 10. The end of the divine judgment is the manifestation of the divine justice; and how fit is it, that the justice of the universal and supreme Head and Judge of all mankind, in governing his kingdom, should be most publicly manifested, and exhibited to his whole kingdom! This doctrine of the day of judgment, exceedingly becomes the universal moral Head of the world, who rules through all generations.

§ 11. If there shall ever come a time, wherein the Lawgiver and Judge of the world will publicly regulate the moral state of all generations, the end of the world, when there shall be a final period to all farther probation, seems to be a proper time for it. If ever, by divine wisdom and righteousness, there be

brought about a righteous, holy, and glorious issue of the confused state of the world, it will be, when this world shall have come to an end. As the proper time for judging a particular person, is, when the probationary state of that person is at an end: so the proper time for the public judgment of the world, is, when the probationary world comes to an end.

§ 12. There is all reason to think, that the wicked will hereafter be punished together, having a place of punishment assigned for them, where they shall suffer divine vengeance in sight of one another: and that the righteous will also be rewarded together. If so, it is most requisite that their judgment should be together; that they may understand the ground and reason of that punishment, and of that reward, which they shall see in each other.

§ 13. It is most agreeable to reason, that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, wherein God will reward and make happy good men, and make wicked men miserable. And if there be a future state of happiness to God's favourites, it is rational to suppose, that this should be ETERNAL: because, otherwise, God's greatest favourites, to whom he gives the greatest rewards in another world, would, in one respect, have most to torment them; to wit, the dreadful and eternal end of that sweet happiness. The sweeter and more happy life is, the more terrible are death and the thoughts and expectations of it. It is not likely that God would add such a sting to the sweetest enjoyments and rewards of his greatest favourites. It is rational, therefore, to suppose, that the life he gives them after death, is life eternal; life that is not to come to an end by another worse death, consisting not only in the destruction of the body, but the abolition of the soul. God has not made men like the brutes, who cannot contemplate futurity, and therefore, have no allay to present enjoyment by the prospect of an end by death. And if it be so, that there be an eternal state of happiness in another world, set before us to be sought after: then how rational are the Christian doctrines and precepts, of placing our affections on heavenly objects; of weanedness from the world; of behaving as pilgrims and strangers on the earth; of not laying up treasures on the earth, but in heaven; of selling all for the kingdom of heaven; of not looking at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal! Hence, also, the reasonableness of the Christian precepts of patience under sufferings, seeing these afflictions are but for a moment, in comparison with the duration of the future weight of glory.

§ 14. The doctrine of the gospel concerning an INVISIBLE WORLD, to which good men are to be transferred, and where they are to have their inheritance and fixed abode, is

most rational on this account, that this visible world is corruptible in its own nature. Such is the nature and constitution of it, that it must come to an end. And it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Creator would leave it gradually to perish, languishing in a decayed, broken, miserable state, through thousands of ages, gradually growing more and more wretched, before it is quite destroyed. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose, that there will be a time wherein its Creator will immediately interpose, to put the world to an end, and destroy it suddenly. And, at that time, all the living inhabitants of the world, that are not taken from it and translated to some other abode, must perish, and be destroyed in a very awful manner, by the immediate hand of God, with most inexpressible manifestations of his mighty power and great majesty. And who can believe, that at that time, when God in this manner immediately interposes, he will make no distinction between the virtuous, and his enemies? That this awful destruction and wrath shall come upon all alike? There will be no necessity of it from the course of nature. For, at that time, by the supposition, God will put an end to the course of nature. God will immediately and miraculously interpose. The whole affair shall be miraculous, and by God's immediate hand; and, therefore, a miraculous deliverance of the good, will not be at all beside God's manner of operation at this time. He can as easily, and without departing any more from the stated course of things, miraculously deliver the virtuous, as he can miraculously destroy the wicked.

§ 15. Therefore, we may well suppose, that at that time, when God is about to put an end to the frame of this visible universe, the virtuous will be translated into some other world, beyond the limits of the visible one. And if God deigns thus to deal with all the good that shall be found alive on the earth at that time, how rational is it to suppose, that he deals in like manner with the good in all generations? That they all are translated into that distant, invisible world? Without doubt, the world into which God will receive his favourites, when this corruptible world shall perish, shall be incorruptible. He will not translate them from one corruptible world to another. He will not save them from one world that is to perish, to carry them to another world that is to perish. Therefore, they shall be immortal, and have eternal life; and, doubtless, that world will be unspeakably better than this, and free from all that destruction, that fleeting, fading, perishing, empty nature, that attends all the things of this world; and their bodies shall be immortal, and as secure from perishing, as the world is, to which they are translated.

§ 16. This makes it most reasonable to suppose, that good men, in all ages, are translated to that world. For why should

so vast a difference be made, between the virtuous that shall be of the last generation, and the virtuous of all preceding generations? Seeing there is a far distant and invisible world provided for some of the virtuous inhabitants of this world, it is reasonable to suppose, that all the good shall have their habitation and inheritance together there, as one society, partaking of the same reward; as they were of the same race of mankind, and loved and served God, and followed him in the same state here below, in the performance of the same duties, the same work, and under like trials and difficulties.

§ 17. It is also, hence, rational to suppose, that there should be a RESURRECTION of the bodies of the saints of all past generations. For, from what has been observed before, the bodies of the saints of the last generation, will be preserved from perishing with the world, and will be translated. And, doubtless, if all the good of all generations, are to have a like reward, and are to dwell together in the same world, in one society, they shall be in a like state, partaking of a like reward.

§ 18. The reasonableness of the doctrine of the resurrection, will appear, if we suppose, that union with a body is the most rational state of perfection of the human soul; which may be argued from the consideration, that this was the condition in which the human soul was created at first; and that its separation from the body is no improvement of its condition, being an alteration brought on by sin, and was inflicted under the notion of evil, and expressly as punishment, upon the forfeiture of a privilege. From whence we must conclude, that the former state of union to the body, was a better state than the disunion which was threatened. Sin introduced that death that consists in the separation of body and soul. The state of innocency was embodied: the state of guilt was disembodied.* Therefore, as Christ came to restore from all the calamities which came from sin, it is most reasonable to suppose, that he will restore the union of soul and body.

CHAPTER V.

The Miracles of Jesus not counterfeited by his enemies, and superior to those under the Old Testament.

§ 1. IT adds to the evidence which is given to the truth of Christianity, by the multitude of miracles wrought by Christ his apostles and followers in the first century, that there were no pretences of inspiration, or miracles, among the Jews (at least none worth notice) in Judea, or any other part of the

* Winder's History of Knowledge, p. 59, 60.

world, if all that multitude, and that long continued series of miracles, recorded to be wrought in confirmation of Christianity, were fictions, vain pretences or enthusiastic imaginations; why were there no pretences or imaginations of the same sort, on the other side, among the Jews, in opposition to these? Those of the Jews that were opposed to Christianity, were vastly the greater part of the nation.—And they had as high an opinion of the honourableness of those gifts of prophecy and miracles, as Christians. They had as much in their notions and tempers, to lead them to a fondness for the claim of such an honour to their party. They were exceedingly proud of their special relation to God, and of their high privilege as the peculiar favourites of heaven; and in this respect, were exalted far above all the world: which is a temper of mind (as we see abundantly) above all others, leading men to pretences of this nature.

§ 2. There could be nothing peculiar in the constitution of the first Christians, tending to enthusiasm, beyond the rest of the Jews; for they were of the same blood, the same race and nation. Nor could it be because they wanted zeal against Christianity, and a desire to oppose and destroy it; or wanted envy and virulent opposition of mind to any pretences in the Christians to excel them in the favour of God, or excellency of any gifts or privileges whatsoever. They had such zeal and such envy, even to madness and fury.

§ 3. The true reason, therefore, why so vast a multitude of miracles were said, and believed, to be openly wrought among Christians for so long a time, even for a whole age, and none among the Jews, must be, that such was the state of things in that age, that it was not possible to palm false pretences of such a kind upon the world; and that those who were most elated with pride, and most ambitious of such an honour, could see no hope of succeeding in any such pretences; and because the Christians indeed were inspired, and were enabled to work miracles, and did work them, as was pretended and believed, in great multitudes, and this continually for so long a time. But God never favoured their adversaries with such a privilege.

§ 4. When Moses objected (Exod. iv.) that perhaps the people would not believe his mission, God directed him to work two miracles to convince them; first, the transmutation of his rod to and from a serpent; and, secondly, the making his hand leprous and healing the leprosy. And it is to be noted, that the preference is given to the last miracle, as being especially what might well be regarded as a good evidence of Moses' divine mission; ver. 8. "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign." By which it is manifest, that such a sort of miracles as Christ wrought, and which he most abounded in, *viz.* his healing the bodies of men

when diseased, were a proper and good evidence of a divine mission.*

§ 5. Moses tells Pharaoh, Exodus viii. 10, "The frogs shall be removed, that thou mayest know that there is none like the Lord our God." The magicians could bring up frogs but not remove them. They brought plagues, but took away none. But if the driving out the frogs was such an evidence of the distinguishing power of the Almighty; how much more the driving out devils from the bodies and souls of men, silencing their oracles, turning them out of their temples, and out of those who used curious arts, as at Ephesus, and afterward abolishing their worship through the Roman empire? For the gods that were worshipped in the heathen world, were devils, Psal. cvi. 37. Deut. xxxii. 17. Lev. xvii. 7. Christ by the prevailing of the Christian religion, cast out those devils out of the very land of Egypt. And which was the greatest work, to drive the frogs out of Egypt, or to drive out the impure spirits that were the gods of Egypt? It is spoken of, Isa. xix. 1, as a glorious manifestation of the majesty of God, that he should ride on a swift cloud, and should come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt should be moved at his presence. See also Jeremiah xliii. 12. But when Christ came into Egypt, in the preaching of his gospel, he moved, dispossessed, and banished the idols of Egypt, and abolished them out of the world. And not only did Christ thus drive away the devils, the false gods out of Egypt, but out of all the nations round about Canaan, that were known by the Israelites, even to the utmost extent of the then known heathen world. These gods were by Christ dispossessed of their ancient tenements, which they had holden age after age, time out of mind. They were utterly abolished; so that they have had no worshippers now for a great many ages, no temples, no sacrifices, no honours done them. They are old, obsolete things now, utterly disregarded in the world. It is abundantly spoken of in the Old Testament as a future glorious work of God, greatly manifesting his power and majesty, and that he should prevail against, and destroy the gods of the heathens, and abolish their worship. But our Jesus has the honour of this glorious work.

§ 6. Again, when Korah and his company charged Moses and Aaron with taking too much upon them, Moses says, Numbers xvi. 5, "To-morrow, the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen, will he cause to come near unto him." And again, ver. 28, 29, 30: "Hereby ye shall know, that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind: if these men die the common death of all men," &c. If the miraculous taking

* See Kidder's Demonstration, part ii. p. 5.

away of men's lives, be so great an evidence of Moses and Aaron's divine mission, and of their being holy, and chosen and appointed of God, how much more is raising men from the dead an evidence of the same work? Which is the greatest work—to take away men's lives, or to restore them to life after they are dead; or, indeed, miraculously to save them from death, when they are sick with mortal diseases? Again: God's causing the earth to open and swallow up those wicked men, is no more an evidence of a divine hand, than Christ's preventing the sea from swallowing up those that were in the ship, by immediately quieting the winds and sea by speaking a word, when the ship was even covered with waves, through the violence of the tempest: At another time, upholding Peter from sinking, and being swallowed up by the tempestuous sea, when walking on the water. Elisha's causing iron to swim, is mentioned, in the Old Testament, as a great miracle. But this was not greater than Christ's walking on the water, and causing Peter to walk upon it. When Elijah had restored to life the widow's son, she says, 1 Kings xvii. 24, "By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth, is truth." But this sort of miracles Christ wrought, besides rising from the dead himself.

§ 7. Moses speaks of God's stilling the tempest in Egypt, and causing the thunder and hail to cease, as that which will convince Pharaoh, that the earth was the Lord's, Exodus ix. 29. Then, by parity of reason, Christ's stilling the tempest, and causing the winds and seas to obey him, is an evidence, that the seas and earth were his. Moses, to convince the people of his divine mission, took some of the water of the river, and poured it out on the dry land, and it was turned to blood; Exod. vii. 17—20. But this was not a greater work, nor so glorious, as Christ's turning water into wine.

§ 8. Abraham's conquering the four kings and their armies, with his armed servants and confederates, greatly affected Melchizedec, king of Salem, and convinced him, that Abraham was God's chosen friend; chosen, that he and his posterity might be blessed as God's people. But what is this to Jesus's conquering the world in its greatest strength; and, when united under that, which by the prophet Daniel is represented as the greatest, and by far the strongest monarchy, by his handful of poor, weak, illiterate disciples?

§ 9. Christ's victory over the false gods of the nations, in this conquest, was far more conspicuous, as the opposition was to them; the strife was more directly with them; the thing professedly sought and aimed at by Christ in the conflict, was the utter destruction of these false gods, the entire rooting of them out, and the abolition of their worship out of the world; and such a victory was obtained: those false gods were for-

saken, their oracles silenced, their temples destroyed, their images every where burnt, and their remembrance made to cease; so that now, for many ages, they have not been remembered, any otherwise, than as instances of the great blindness and folly of their votaries.

§ 10. How often are the miracles wrought in Egypt, spoken of as clear evidences, that he that wrought them, was the supreme God, and the only true God; Exodus vii. 3, 4, 5; chapter viii. 10, 19, 22.

§ 11. The work of Gideon, in conquering the Midianites, and the multitudes that were joined with them, by three hundred men, with the light of lamps, and sound of trumpets, is celebrated as a great work of God's power, Judges vi. 14. and vii. 2. 7. But this is but a mere type of Christ's conquering the world by the preaching of the gospel. This victory over Midian, is spoken of in the scripture, as representing the conquests of the Messiah, Isaiah ix. 4.

CHAPTER VI.

Observations on the Scriptures;—their Authority—and Necessity.

§ 1. Some may ask, why the scripture expresses things so unintelligibly? It tells us of Christ's living in us, of our being united to him, of being the same spirit, and uses many other such like expressions. Why doth it not call directly by their intelligible names, those things that lie hid under these expressions? I answer, Then we should have an hundred pages to express what is implied in these words, "Ye are the temple of the holy Ghost;" neither would it after all be understood by the one-fourth part of mankind. Whereas, as it is expressed, it serves as well to practice, if we will believe what God says, that, some way or other, we are inhabited by the Holy Ghost as a temple, and therefore we ought to keep ourselves holy and pure. And we are united to Christ as much as members are to the head; and therefore ought to rejoice, seeing we know that this union proceeds from his love to us; and that the effects of it are, joy, happiness, spiritual and eternal life, &c. By such similitudes a vast volume is represented to our minds in three words; and things that we are not able to behold directly, are presented before us in lively pictures.

§ 2. There is a strange and unaccountable kind of enchantment, if I may so speak, in scripture history, which although it is destitute of all rhetorical ornaments, makes it vastly more pleasant, agreeable, easy and natural, than any other history whatever. It shines bright with the amiable simplicity of truth.

There is something in the relation, that, at the same time, very much pleases and engages the reader, and evidences the truth of the fact. It is impossible to tell fully what I mean, to any that have not taken notice of it before. One reason doubtless is this: the scripture sets forth things just as they happened, with the minute circumstances of time, place, situation, gesture, habit, &c. in such a natural method, that we seem to be actually present, and we insensibly fancy, not that we are readers, but spectators, yea, actors in the business. These little circumstances wonderfully help to brighten the ideas of the more principal parts of the history. And although the scripture goes beyond other histories, in mentioning such circumstances; yet no circumstances are mentioned, but those that wonderfully brighten the whole. So the story is told very fully, and without in the least crowding things together, before one has fully taken up what was last related; and yet told in much less room, than any one else could tell it. Notwithstanding the minute circumstances mentioned, which other historians leave out, it leads along our ideas so naturally and easily, that they seem to go neither too fast nor too slow. One seems to know as exactly how it is from the relation, as if we saw it. The mind is so led on, that sometimes we seem to have a full, large, and particular history of a long time: so that if we should shut the book immediately, without taking particular notice, we should not suppose the story had been told in half so little room; and yet a long train of ideas is communicated. The story is so narrated, that our mind, although some facts are not mentioned, yet naturally traces the whole transaction. And although it be thus skilfully contrived, yet things are told in such a simple, plain manner, that the least child can understand them. This is a perfection in the sacred writers, which no other authors can equal.

§ 3. It is an argument with me, that the world is not yet very near its end, that the church has made no greater progress in understanding the mysteries of the scriptures. The scriptures, in all their parts, were made for the use of the church here on earth; and it seems reasonable to suppose, that God will, by degrees, unvail their meaning to his church. It was made mysterious, in many places having great difficulties, that his people might have exercise for their pious wisdom and study, and that his church might make progress in the understanding of it as the philosophical world makes progress in the understanding of the book of nature, and in unfolding its mysteries. A divine wisdom appears in ordering it thus. How much better is it to have divine truth and light break forth in this way, than it would have been, to have had it shine at once to every one, without any labour or industry of the understanding? It would be less delightful, and less prized and

admired, and would have had vastly less influence on men's hearts, and would have been less to the glory of God.

§ 4. It seems to be evident, that the church is not as yet arrived to that perfection in understanding the scripture, which we can imagine is the highest that God ever intended the church should come to. There are a multitude of things in the Old Testament, which the church then did not understand, but were reserved to be unfolded in the Christian church, such as most of their types, and shadows and prophecies, which make up the greatest part of the Old Testament. So I believe there are now many truths that remain to be discovered by the church, in the glorious times that are approaching.

§ 5. Another thing, from which we may draw the same conclusion, is, that it is the manner of God, to keep his church on earth in hope of a still more glorious state; and so their prayers are enlivened, when they pray that the interest of religion may be promoted, and God's kingdom may come. God kept the church, under the Old Testament, in hope of the times of the Messiah. The disciples of Christ were kept in hope of the conversion of the Roman empire, which was effected about three hundred years after. But it seems to me, not likely, that the church, from that time, should have no more to hope for from God's word, no higher advancement, till the consummation of all things. Indeed, there will be a great, but short apostacy, a little before the end of the world. But then, it is probable, the thing that the church will hope and long for, will be Christ's last coming, to advance his church to its highest and its everlasting glory; for that will then appear to be the only remedy; for the church will expect no more from the clear light and truth which will have been so gloriously displayed already, under the millennium. Another end of thus keeping his church in hope, is, to quicken and enliven their endeavours to propagate religion, and to advance the kingdom of Jesus. It is a great encouragement to such endeavours, to think, that such times are coming, wherein Christianity shall prevail over all enemies. And it would be a great discouragement to the labours of nations, or pious magistrates and divines, to endeavour to advance Christ's kingdom, if they understood that it was not to be advanced. And, indeed, the keeping alive such hopes in the church, has a tendency to enliven all piety and religion in the general, amongst God's people.

§ 6. When we inquire, whether or no we have scripture grounds for any doctrine, the question is, whether or no the scripture exhibits it in any way to the eye of the mind, or to the eye of reason? We have no grounds to assert, that it was God's intent, by the scripture, *in so many terms*, to declare every doctrine that he would have us believe. There are many

things the scripture may suppose that we know already. And if what the scripture says, together with what is plain to reason, leads to believe any doctrine, we are to look upon ourselves as taught that doctrine by the scripture. God may reveal things in scripture which way he pleases. If, by what he there reveals, the thing is any way clearly discovered to the understanding, or eye of the mind, it is our duty to receive it as his revelation.

§ 7. The greatest part of Christians, were very early agreed, what books were canonical, and to be looked upon as the rule of their faith. It is impossible, in the nature of things, but some churches must receive the books long after others, as they lay at a greater distance from the places where they were written, or had less convenience of communication with them. Besides, as Christianity for a long time laboured under the disadvantages of continual persecution, no general councils could be convened, and so there could be no public notification of universal agreement in this matter. But, notwithstanding all these things, it is yet discoverable, that, as soon as can be supposed, after the writing the books, the Christians, in all countries, remarkably agreed in receiving them as canonical.

§ 8. Several of the first writers of Christianity, have left us, in their works, *catalogues* of the sacred books of the New Testament, which, though made in countries at a vast distance from each other, do very little differ. Great were the pains and care of those early Christians, to be well assured what were the genuine writings of the apostles, and to distinguish them from all pretended revelations of designing men, and the forgeries they published under sacred titles. Thus, when a presbyter of Asia had published a spurious piece, under the name of Paul, he was immediately convicted, and notice of the forgery was soon conveyed to Carthage, and the churches of Africa.

§ 9. Hence it follows, that the primitive Christians are proper judges to determine what book is canonical, and what not. For nothing can be more absurd than to suppose, in those early ages, an agreement so universal, without good and solid foundation; or, in other words, it is next to impossible, either that so great a number of men should agree in a cheat, or be imposed upon by a cheat. But there are some particular circumstances that make the inference more clear as to the Christian books, than others; such as, the prodigious esteem the books at first were received with; the constant use that was made of them in their religious assemblies; the translations made of them very early into other languages, &c.*

* See Jones's Canon of the New Testament, part i. chap. 5.

§ 10. The omission of a book in some one or two particular catalogues, cannot, with any reason, be urged against its canonical authority, if it be found in all, or most of the others, and any good reason can be assigned for the omission, where it occurs. Thus, for instance, the Revelation is omitted, either perhaps because it was not known to the author, or its credit was not sufficiently established in the country where he lived; or perhaps, which may be as probable as the other, because, it being so full of mysteries, few or none were judged proper or able to read it to any purpose. This was certainly the case in England: this book being, for this reason, omitted in the public calendar for reading the scriptures, though it be received into the canon. If, therefore, these, or any such good reasons, can be assigned for the omission of a book in a particular catalogue, it will be very unfair to infer, that such book is apocryphal, especially when it is to be found in many or most other catalogues.

§ 11. The catalogues drawn up by ATHANASIUS, Bp. of Alexandria, (A. D. 315,)—by EPIPHANUS, Bp. of Salamis, (A. D. 370,)—by JEROME, of Dalmatia, (A. D. 382,)—by RUFFIN, presbyter of Aquilegium, (A. D. 390,)—by AUGUSTINE, Bp. of Hippo, (A. D. 391,) by 44 Bps. assembled in a third council of Carthage, (A. D. 416,) were perfectly the same with ours now received.*

§ 12. It is exceedingly natural to suppose, that these two things together, would soon lead the apostles to write some history of the acts, and doctrine, and sufferings of Christ, their great Lord, and the head of the Christian church; *viz. first*, Their unavoidable experience of the need of such a thing; and, *secondly*, The example of the penmen of the Old Testament, in writing the history of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and others, whose persons and actions they esteemed of vastly less importance than those of the Son of God, who was greater than Jonas, or David, or Solomon, or Moses, or Abraham.

§ 13. It is a great argument, that there were some genuine gospels, or authentic histories of Christ's life and death, that the Christian church had under the name of gospels, that there were such a multitude of forged fabulous accounts, or histories of Christ, all under the same name of gospels. These fictions are evidently counterfeits or imitations of something that was looked on by all as true and undoubted. And, that there should be such a multitude of counterfeits and imitations of these gospels, shows not only that there were genuine gospels, but also shows the great value and importance of these genuine gospels, and the high repute they had in the Christian churches.—Mr. Jones mentions the following spurious gospels, now not extant.

* See Jones's Canon of the New Testament, part i. chap. 8.

mentioned by the writers of the primitive church: By the writers of he second century, the gospel of Judas Iscariot; the gospel of truth; the gospel of the Egyptians; the gospel of Valentinus; the gospel of Marcion. By writers of the third century, the gospel of the Twelve Apostles; the gospel of Basilides; the gospel of Thomas; the gospel of Matthias. By writers of the fourth century, the gospel of Scythianus; the gospel of Bartholomew; the gospel of Apelles; the gospel of Lucianus; the gospel of Hesychius; the gospel of Perfection; the gospel of Eve; the gospel of Philip; the gospel of the Ebionites; the gospel of Jude; the gospel of the Encratites; the gospel of Cerinthus; the gospel of Merinthus; the gospel of Thaddeus; the gospel of Barnabas; the gospel of Andrew. And some he mentions besides, that are now extant; as the gospel of our Saviour's infancy; the gospel of Nicodemus.

§ 14. Public societies cannot be maintained without trials and witnesses: And if witnesses are not firmly persuaded, that he who holds the supreme power over them, is omniscient, just, and powerful, and will revenge falsehood; there will be no dependence on their oaths, or most solemn declarations.—God, therefore, must be the supreme Magistrate; society depends absolutely on him; and all kingdoms and communities are but provinces of his universal kingdom, who is King of kings, Lord of lords, and Judge of judges.—Thus as mankind cannot subsist out of society, nor society itself subsist without religion; I mean, without faith in the infinite power, and wisdom, and justice of God, and a judgment to come; religion cannot be a falsehood. It is not credible, that all the happiness of mankind, the whole civil world, and peace, safety, justice, and truth itself, should have nothing to stand on but a lie: It is not to be supposed, that God would give the world no other foundation. So that religion is absolutely necessary, and must have some sure foundation. But there can be no good, sure foundation of religion, without mankind having a right idea of God, and some sure and clear knowledge of him, and of our dependence on him. Lord Shaftesbury himself owns, that wrong ideas of God, will hurt society, as much, if not more, than ignorance of him can do.

§ 15. Now, the question is, "Whether nature and reason alone can give us a right idea of God, and are sufficient to establish among mankind a clear and sure knowledge of his nature, and the relation we stand in to him, and his concern with us? It may well be questioned whether any man hath this from the mere light of nature. Nothing can seem more strange, than that the wisest and most sagacious of all men, I mean the philosophers, should have searched with all imaginable candour and anxiety for this, and searched in vain, if the light of nature alone is sufficient to give it to, and establish it among, mankind

in general."—There never was a man known or heard of, who had an idea of God, without being taught it.—Whole sects of philosophers denied the very being of God; and some have died martyrs to Atheism, as, *Vaninus*, *Jordanus*, *Bruno*, *Cosimir*, *Liszinsai*, *and Mahomet Effendi*.—A man confined to a dungeon all his days, and deprived of all conversation with mankind, probably would not so much as once consider who made him, or whether he was made or not, nor entertain the least notion of God. There are many instances of people born absolutely deaf and blind, who never showed the least sense of religion, or knowledge of God.

§ 16. It is one thing to work out a demonstration of a point when once it is proposed, and another to strike upon the point itself. I cannot tell whether any man would have considered the works of creation, as effects, if he had never been told they had a cause. We know very well, that, even after the being of such a cause was much talked of in the world, and believed by the generality of mankind; yet many and great philosophers held the world to be eternal; and others ascribed what we call the works of creation, to an eternal series of causes. If the most sagacious of the philosophers were capable of doing this, after hearing so much of a first cause and a creation, what would they have done, and what would the gross of mankind, who are inattentive and ignorant, have thought of the matter, if nothing had been taught concerning God and the origin of things; but every single man left solely to such intimation as his own senses and reason could have given him? We find, the earlier ages of the world did not trouble themselves about the question, whether the being of God could be proved by reason; but either never inquired into the matter, or took their opinions, upon that head, merely from tradition. But allowing that every man is able to demonstrate to himself, that the world, and all things contained therein, are effects, and had a beginning, which I take to be a most absurd supposition, and look upon it to be almost impossible for unassisted reason to go so far: yet, if effects are to be ascribed to similar causes, and a good and wise effect must suppose a good and wise cause; by the same way of reasoning, all the evil and irregularity in the world must be attributed to an evil and unwise cause. So that either the first cause must be both good and evil, wise and foolish, or else there must be two first causes, an evil and irrational, as well as a good and wise principle. Thus, man left to himself, would be apt to reason, "If the cause and the effects are similar and conformable, matter must have a material cause; there being nothing more impossible for us to conceive, than how matter should be produced by spirit, or any thing else but matter." The best reasoner in the world, endeavouring to find out the

causes of things, by the things themselves, might be led into the grossest errors and contradictions, and find himself, at the end in extreme want of an instructor.

§ 17. In all countries we are acquainted with, knowledge bears an exact proportion to instruction. Why does the learned and well educated, reason better than the mere citizen? why the citizen better than the poor? why the English poor better than the Spanish? why the Spanish better than the Moorish? why the Moorish better than the Negro? and why he better than the Hottentot? If, then, reason is found to go hand in hand, and step by step with education; what would be the consequence, if there were no education? There is no fallacy more gross, than to imagine reason, utterly untaught and undisciplined, capable of the same attainments in knowledge, as reason well refined and instructed: or to suppose, that reason can as easily find in itself principles to argue from, as draw the consequences, when once they are found; I mean, especially in respect to objects not perceivable by our senses. In ordinary articles of knowledge, our senses and experience furnish reason with ideas and principles to work on: continual conferences and debates give it exercise in such matters; and that improves its vigour and activity. But, in respect to God, it can have no right idea nor axiom to set out with, till he is pleased to reveal it.

§ 18. What instance can be mentioned, from any history, of any one nation under the sun, that emerged from atheism or idolatry, into the knowledge or adoration of the one true God, without the assistance of revelation? The Americans, the Africans, the Tartars, and the ingenious Chinese, have had time enough, one would think, to find out the true and right idea of God; and yet, after above five thousand years' improvements, and the full exercise of reason, they have, at this day, got no further in their progress towards the true religion, than to the worship of stocks and stones and devils. How many thousand years must be allowed to these nations, to reason themselves into the true religion? What the light of nature and reason could do to investigate the knowledge of God, is best seen by what they have already done. We cannot argue more convincingly on any foundation, than that of known and incontestable facts.

§ 19. Le Compte and Duhald assure us, the Chinese, after offering largely to their gods, and being disappointed of their assistance, sometimes sue them for damages, and obtain decrees against them from the Mandarin. This ingenious people, when their houses are on fire, to the imminent peril of their wooden gods, hold them to the flames, in hopes of extinguishing them by it. The Tyrians were a wise people: and there-

fore, when Alexander laid siege to their city, they chained Appollo to Hercules, to prevent his giving them the slip.

§ 20. Revenge and self-murder were not only tolerated, but esteemed heroic by the best of the Heathen. I know not, in all profane history, six more illustrious characters, than those of Lycurgus, Timoleon, Cicero, Cato Uticensis, Brutus, and Germanicus. The first encouraged tricking and stealing, by an express law. The second, upon principle, murdered his own brother. Cicero, with all his fine talk about religion and virtue, had very little of either; as may appear by what he says, (I think it is in a letter to Atticus,) on the death of his daughter Tullia, "I hate the very gods, who hitherto have been so profuse in their favours to me;" and by deserting his friends and his country and turning a servile flatterer to Cæsar. Brutus concludes all his mighty heroism with this exclamation: "Virtue, I have pursued thee in vain, and found thee to be but an empty name;" and then kills himself. Cato's virtue was not strong enough to hinder his turning a public robber and oppressor, (witness his Cyprian expedition;) nor to bear up against the calamities of life; and so he stabbed himself, and ran away like a coward, from his country and the world. Germanicus, who exceeded all men in his natural sweetness of temper, at the approach of death, called his friends about him, and spent his last moments in pressing them to take revenge of Piso and Plancina, for poisoning or bewitching him; in directing them how this might best be done; and in receiving their oaths for the performance of his request. His sense of religion he thus expressed on that occasion: "Had I died by the decree of fate, I should have had just cause of resentment against the gods, for hurrying me away from my parents, my wife and my children, in the flower of my youth, by an untimely death."

§ 21. Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, who were more inclined to the belief of a future existence than the other philosophers, plead for it with arguments of no force; speak of it with the utmost uncertainty; and, therefore, are afraid to found their system of duty and virtue on the expectation of it. Their notions of morality were of a piece with their religion, and had little else for a foundation than vain glory. Tully, in his Treatise of Friendship, says, that virtue proposes glory as its end, and hath no other reward. Accordingly, he maintains, that wars undertaken for glory, are not unlawful, provided they are carried on without the usual cruelty. Diogenes, and the sect of the Cynics, held, that parents have a right to sacrifice and eat their children; and that there is nothing shameful in committing the grossest acts of lewdness publicly, and before the faces of mankind. The virtuous sentiments discovered by the

philosophers on some occasions, will neither palliate these execrable principles, nor suffer us to think those who could abet them, fit instructors for mankind. Zeno, Cleombrotus, and Menippus, committed murder on themselves; the last, because he had lost a considerable sum of money, which, as he was an usurer, went a little too near his heart. That I do not charge the philosophers with worse principles and practices, than they themselves maintain, and their own Pagan historians ascribe to them, any one may satisfy himself who will consult Diogenes, Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, Lucian, Plutarch, and the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero.

§ 22. Thus, it is plain, whether we consider what the human understanding could do, or what it actually did, that it could not have attained to a sufficient knowledge of God, without revelation; so that the demonstration brought in favour of some religion, ends in a demonstration of the revealed. When we attentively consider the nature of man, we find it necessary he should have some religion. When we consider the nature of God, we must conclude he never would have made a falsehood necessary to the happiness of his rational creatures; and that therefore there must be a true religion. And when we consider, that, by our natural faculties, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a right idea of God, till he reveals it to us; that all the Gentile world hath run into the grossest theological errors, and, in consequence of these, into the most enormous customs and crimes; and that no legislator ever founded his scheme of civil government on any supposed religious dictates of nature, but always on some real or pretended revelations: we cannot help ascribing all the true religion in the world to divine instruction, and all the frightful variety of religious errors to human invention; and to that dark and degenerate nature, by the imaginary light of which, Deists suppose the right idea of God may be easily and universally discovered.

§ 23. Socrates, who never travelled out of Greece, had nothing to erect a scheme of religion or morality on, but the scattered fragments of truth, handed down from time immemorial among his countrymen, or imported by Pythagoras, Thales, and others, who had been in Egypt and the East. These he picked out from a huge heap of absurdities and errors, under which they were buried; and, by the help of a most prodigious capacity, laying them together, comparing them with the nature of things and drawing consequences from them, he found reason to question the soundness of the Grecian theology and morality. But this is all the length he seems to have gone. He reasoned extremely well against the prevailing errors of his time; but was able to form no system of religion or morality. This was a work above the strength of his nature, and the lights he enjoyed. He taught his disciples to worship

the gods, and to ground the distinction between right and wrong on the laws of their country; in the latter of which he followed the saying of his master, Archelaus, who taught, that what is just or dishonest, is defined by law, not by nature.

§ 24. The notions of Plato concerning the divine nature, were infinitely more sublime and nearer the truth, than those of his master, Socrates. He did not content himself merely with removing errors: He ventured on a system; and maintained, that virtue is a science, and that God is the object and source of duty; that there is but one God, the fountain of all being, and superior to all essence; that he hath a Son, called The World: that there is a judgment to come, by which the just, who have suffered in this life, shall be recompensed in the other, and the wicked punished eternally; that God is omnipresent: and, consequently, that the wicked, if he were to dive into the deepest caverns of the earth, or should get wings, and fly into the heavens, would not be able to escape from him: that man is formed in the image of God; and that, in order to establish laws and government, relations made by true traditions and ancient oracles, are to be consulted. These points, so much insisted on by Plato, are far from being the growth of Greece, or his own invention, but derived from Eastern traditions, which, we know, he travelled for, at least as far as Egypt. He was wiser than his teacher, (who was a much greater man,) because his lights were better: But, as they were not sufficient, he ran into greater errors, speaking plainly as if he believed in a plurality of gods; making goods, women, and children, common, &c.

§ 25. The natural faculties of men, in all nations, are alike: and, did nature itself furnish all men with the means and materials of knowledge, philosophy need never turn traveller, either in order to her own improvement, or to the communication of her lights to the world. How came it to pass, that Scythia did not produce so many, so great philosophers as Greece? I think it very evident, that the great difference between these countries as to learning and instruction, arose from this: The latter had the benefit of commerce with the Phœnicians, from whence they came by the knowledge of letters, and probably of navigation; and, with the Egyptians, from whom they learned the greater part of their theology, policy, arts, and sciences. Such advantages, the Scythians wanted; and, therefore, although their natural talents were as good as those of the Grecians, they were not able to make any improvements in philosophy. Why are the Asiatic Scythians at this day as ignorant as ever, while the European Scythians are little inferior to the other nations of Europe in arts and politeness? And how does it come to pass, that we, of this day, take upon us to approve the philosophy of Socrates and

Plato, rather than that of Epicurus and Aristippus? The Grecians were divided in this matter: some followed the notions of the former, and, others, those of the latter. Why did not reason put the matter out of question in those times, or at least immediately after? The infinite contradictions and uncertainties among the ancient philosophers, produced the sects of the Sceptics. In respect to religion, Socrates and Plato either were, or pretended to be, Sceptics, beating down the absurd notions of others, but seldom building up any thing of their own; or, when they did, building on mere conjectures, or arguments suspected by themselves.

§ 26. If it be said, the finding out of truth by the light of nature, is a work of time; time hath taught the Tartars, Africans, and Americans, little or nothing of true theology, or morality, even yet. Time, of itself, can search nothing. It was the Christian religion that opened the eyes of the polite nations of Europe, and even of the deists of this age, wherein their eyes are still open, and they have any true principles by which they are able to examine the philosophy of the ancients, and, by comparing their several opinions one with another, and with the truths derived from the Christian revelation, to decide in favour of some against the rest.

§ 27. As to the doctrine of THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL; it is certain, nothing can be more agreeable to reason, when once the doctrine is proposed and thoroughly canvassed; while, at the same time, there is no one probable opinion in the world, which mankind, left entirely to themselves, would have been more unlikely to have started. Who, if he was not assured of it by good authority, would ever take it into his head to imagine, that man, who dies, and rots, and vanishes for ever, like all other animals, still exists? It is well, if this, when proposed, can be believed; but, to strike out the thought itself, is somewhat, I am afraid, too high and difficult for the capacity of men. The only natural argument, of any weight, for the immortality of the soul, takes its rise from this observation, that justice is not extended to the good, nor executed upon the bad man in this life; and, that as the Governor of the world is just, man must live hereafter to be judged. But as this only argument that can be drawn from mere reason, in order either to lead us to a discovery of our own immortality, or to support the opinion of it when once started, is founded entirely on the knowledge of God and his attributes; and, as we have already seen, that such knowledge is almost unattainable by the present light of nature, the argument itself, which, before the fall, could not possibly have been thought of, is, since the fall, clogged with all the difficulties mere reason labours under, in finding out a right idea of God. And, besides, this argument, in itself, is utterly inconclusive, on the

principles of the deists of our age and nation: because they insist that virtue fully rewards, and vice fully punishes itself. It is no wonder, that many heathen nations believed a future state, as they received it by tradition from their ancestors. But yet, there is this evidence, that mankind had not this doctrine merely from the easy and plain dictates of reason and nature, that many did not believe it.

§ 28. Socrates, in the Phædon of Plato, says most men were of opinion, that the soul upon its separation from the body, is dissipated and reduced to nothing. And Tully, in his first Tusculan question, says, Phercydes Cyrus, preceptor to Pythagoras, was the first person known to the learned world, who taught the immortality of the soul. The other arguments brought by Plato and Cicero for the immortality of the soul, besides that already mentioned, are very inconclusive. They themselves thought so. The former, in his Phædon, makes Socrates speak with some doubt concerning his own arguments, and introduces Simmias saying to Socrates, after having listened to his principal reasonings, "We ought to lay hold of the strongest arguments for this doctrine, that either we ourselves, or others can suggest to us. If both ways prove ineffectual, we must however put up with the best proofs we can get, till some *promise* or *revelation* shall clear up the point to us.—One of Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul, is this: "Every cause produces an effect contrary to itself; and that therefore, as life produces death, so death shall produce life." Cicero, to prove that the soul will exist after it is separated from the body, endeavours to prove that it existed before it was joined to it; and to that end he insists, "that what we call aptness in children to learn, is nothing more than memory." Another argument of Plato is this: "That alone which moves itself, inasmuch as it is never deserted by itself, never ceases to move: but the mind moves itself, and borrows not its motion from any thing else, and therefore must move, and consequently exist for ever."

The wisdom of Socrates and Plato united, produce such arguments for a most favourite opinion, as they themselves are dissatisfied with, and therefore call for more than human help.

§ 29. Cicero being so fond of this opinion, that, as he says he would rather err with Plato in holding it, than think rightly with those who deny it, poorly echoes the arguments of Plato; adds little to them himself; and at the conclusion, in a manner giving up the point, with all the arguments brought to support it, endeavours to comfort himself and others against the approach of death, by proving death to be no evil, even supposing the soul to perish with the body. And this great philosopher, with all his knowledge, gives but one lot to the good and evil

in another life. It was his opinion, *If the soul is immortal, it must be happy: if it perishes with the body, it cannot be miserable.* This consolation he administers alike to all men, without making any distinction, and consequently leaves moral obligation on a mere temporal footing, which in effect, is not a whit better than downright atheism. But in his dream of Scipio, when he does not reason nor seem to inculcate any particular doctrine, he indeed introduces the elder Scipio telling the younger, by way of dream, that those who served their country, and cultivated justice and the other virtues, should go to heaven after death: But that the souls of those that had violated the laws of the Gods and men, should, after leaving their bodies, be tossed about on the earth, and not return to heaven for many ages. Now if a person of Cicero's abilities and learning could, from the light of nature, work out no better scheme than this, which renders futurity almost useless to moral obligation, how much farther from truth and reason must we suppose the bulk of mankind to stray, if each ignorant person is to be left entirely to his own thoughts and discoveries, in respect to the future rewards of virtue, and punishments of vice?

§ 30. Thus upon considering the extent and strength of human faculties, we have found them at present utterly incapable of attaining to any competent notion of divine law, if left wholly to themselves. This is vastly confirmed by experience; from which it appears, that mankind, instead of being able, through a long series of ages, by the mere light of nature, to find out a right idea of God and his laws; on the contrary—after having without doubt, been well acquainted at first with both—gradually, and at length almost universally, lost sight of both; insomuch, that idolatry as bad as atheism, and wickedness worse than brutality, were established for religion and law in all countries. The philosophers who lived in the most knowing countries, and sought for religion and moral truth, but sought in vain, as the wisest of them confess, render this argument still more cogent and conclusive.

§ 31. As the apostle Paul observes in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, men did not like to retain God in their knowledge; and, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Thus were their foolish hearts darkened; upon which God gave them over to a reprobate mind, and gave them up to uncleanness, to sins of all kinds, even such as were utterly against nature. St. Chrysostom, in his descant on this passage, says, "The Gentiles fell into a kind of madness, insomuch, that having deprived themselves of the light, and involved their minds in the darkness of their own thoughts, their attempt to travel towards heaven ended in a

miserable shipwreck, as his must do, who, in a dark night, undertakes a voyage by sea." Being guided by conceit, and too great an attachment to sensible things, they entered upon a wrong way; so that, still the longer they travelled, the farther they wandered from the knowledge of the true God, and right religion. The doctrine of St. Paul, concerning the blindness into which the Gentiles fell, is so confirmed by the state of religion in Africa, America, and even China, where, to this day, no advances towards the true religion have been made, that we can no longer be at a loss to judge of the insufficiency of unassisted reason, to dissipate the prejudices of the Heathen world, and open their eyes to religious truths.

§ 32. The starting of a proposition is one thing, and the proof of it quite another. Every science has its proofs in the nature of things. Yet all sciences require to be taught; and those require it most, the first principles of which lie a little out of the reach of ordinary capacities. The first principles of religion, being of a high and spiritual nature, are harder to be found out than those of any other science; because the minds of men are gross and earthly, used to objects of sense; and all their depraved appetites and corrupt dispositions, which are by nature opposite to the true religion, help to increase the natural weakness of their reason, and clip the wings of their contemplation, when they endeavour by their own strength, to soar towards God and heavenly things. No man in his, nor hardly in any other time, knew better how to catch at the evidence of divine truths discovered in the works of creation, nor had better opportunities than Plato. Yet, with all the help he derived from foreign and domestic instruction, he finds himself on every occasion at a loss. When he speaks of God and divine matters, he relies on oracles, traditions, and revelations; and having got a little taste of this kind of instruction, is every now and then confessing his want of more, and wishing for it with the greatest anxiety. And, not thinking the traditions which he was acquainted with sufficient, he talks of a future instructor to be sent from God, to teach the world a more perfect knowledge of religious duties. "The truth is," (says he, speaking in his first book, *De Legibus*, concerning future rewards and punishments,) "to determine or establish any thing certain about these matters, in the midst of so many doubts and disputations, is the work of God only." In his Phædon, one of the speakers says to Socrates concerning the *immortality of the soul*, "I am of the same opinion with you, that in this life, it is either absolutely impossible, or extremely difficult, to arrive at a clear knowledge in this matter." In the apology he wrote for Socrates, he puts these words into his mouth, on the subject of reformation of manners: "You may pass the remainder of your days in sleep, or despair of finding out a sufficient expedient for this

purpose, if God, in his providence, doth not send you some other instructor." And in his Epinomis he says, "Let no man take upon him to teach, if God do not lead the way."

§ 33. In the book *De Mundo*, ascribed to Aristotle, we have a remarkable passage to this effect: "It is an old tradition, almost universally received, that all things proceeded from God, and subsist through him; and that no nature is self-sufficient, or independent of God's protection and assistance." In his metaphysics, he ascribes the belief of the gods, and of this, that the Deity compasses and comprehends all nature, to a traditionary habit of speaking, handed down from the first men to after ages. Cicero, in his treatise concerning the nature of the gods, introduces Cotta blaming those who endeavoured by argumentation, to prove there are gods, and affirming that this only served to make the point doubtful, which by the instructions and traditions of their forefathers, had been sufficiently made known to them, and established. Plutarch, speaking of the worship paid to a certain ideal divinity, which his friend had called in question, says, "It is enough to believe pursuant to the faith of our ancestors, and the instructions communicated to us in the country where we were born and bred; than which, we can neither find out nor apply, any argument more to be depended on."

§ 34. It will be further useful to observe, that the thoughts of men, with regard to any internal law, will be always mainly influenced by their sentiments concerning the *chief good.* Whatsoever power or force may do, in respect to the outward actions of a man, nothing can oblige him to think or act, as often as he is at liberty, against what he takes to be his chief good or interest. No law, or system of laws, can possibly answer the end and purpose of a law, till the grand question, what is the chief happiness and end of man, be determined, and so cleared up, that every man may be fully satisfied about it. Before our Saviour's time, the world was infinitely divided on this important head. The philosophers were miserably bewildered in all their researches after the chief good. Each sect, each subdivision of a sect, had a chief good of its own, and rejected all the rest. They advanced as Varro tells us, no fewer than 288 opinions in relation to this matter; which shows, by a strong experiment, that the light of nature was altogether unable to settle the difficulty. Every man, if left to the particular bias of his own nature, chooses out a chief good for himself, and lays the stress of all his thoughts and actions on it. Now, if the supposed chief good of any man should lead him, as it often does, to violate the laws of society, to hurt others, and act against the general good of mankind, he will be very unfit for society; and consequently as he cannot subsist out of it, an enemy to himself.

§ 35. If Christianity came too late into the world, what is called natural religion came full as late; and there are no footsteps of natural religion, in any sense of the words, to be found at this day, but where Christianity hath been planted. In every place else, religion hath no conformity with reason or truth. So far is the light of nature from lending sufficient assistance. It is strange, that the natural light should be so clear, and yet darkness so great, that in all unassisted countries the most monstrous forms of religion, derogatory to God, and prejudicial to man, should be contrived by some, and swallowed by the rest, with a most voracious credulity. I could wish most heartly, that all nations were Christians; yet, since it is otherwise, we derive this advantage from it, that we have a standing and contemporary demonstration of that which nature, left to herself, can do. Had all the world been Christians for some ages past, our present libertines would insist, that Christianity had done no service to mankind; that nature could have sufficiently directed herself; and that all the stories told, either in sacred or profane history, of the idolatry and horrible forms of religion in ancient times, were forged by Christian priests, to make the world think revelation necessary, and natural reason incapable of dictating true and right notions of religion. But, as the case stands at present, we have such proofs of the insufficiency of unassisted reason in this behalf, as all the subtility of libertines is unable to evade.

§ 36. All that the Grecians, Romans, and present Chinese, know of true religion, they were taught traditionally. As to their corrupt notions and idolatries, they were of their own invention. The Grecians, who were by far the most knowing people of the three, were as gross idolaters as the rest, till Plato's time. He travelled into the east, and ran higher towards truth in his sentiments of religion than others: but still worshipped the gods of his country, and durst not speak out all he knew. However, he formed a great school, and, both through his writings and scholars, instructed his countrymen in a kind of religious philosophy, that tended much more directly and strongly to reformation of manners, than either the dictates of their own reason, or of their other philosophers. All the philosophy of the Gentile nations, excepting that of Socrates and Plato, was derived from the source of self-sufficiency. Only these two acknowledge the blindness of human nature, and the necessity of a divine instructor. No other Heathen philosopher founded his morality on any sense of religion, or ever dreamt of an inability in man to render himself happy.*

* From § 14—§ 36, is chiefly out of "Deism Revealed," second edition.

CHAPTER VII.

The Insufficiency of Reason as a Substitute for Revelation.

§ 1. By reason, I mean that power or faculty an intelligent being has to judge of the truth of propositions; either immediately, by only looking on the propositions, which is judging by intuition and self-evidence; or by puting together several propositions, which are already evident by intuition, or at least whose evidence is originally derived from intuition.

Great part of Tindal's arguing, in his *Christianity as old as the Creation*, proceeds on this ground, That since reason is the judge whether there be any revelation, or whether any pretended revelation be really such; therefore reason *without* revelation, or *undirected* by revelation, must be the judge concerning each doctrine and proposition contained in that pretended revelation. This is an unreasonable way of arguing. It is as much as to say, that seeing reason is to judge of the truth of any *general* proposition, therefore, in all cases, reason alone, without regard to that proposition, is to judge separately and independently of each particular proposition implied in, or depending and consequent upon, that general proposition. For, whether any supposed or pretended divine revelation be indeed such, is a general proposition: and the particular truths delivered in and by it, are particular propositions implied in, and consequent on, that general one. Tindal supposes each of these truths must be judged of by themselves, independently of our judging of that general truth, that the revelation that declares them is the word of God; evidently supposing, that if each of these propositions, thus judged of particularly, cannot be found to be agreeable to reason, or if reason alone will not show the truth of them; then, that general proposition on which they depend, *viz.* That the word which declares them is a divine revelation, is to be rejected: which is most unreasonable, and contrary to all the rules of common sense, and of the proceeding of all mankind, in their reasoning and judging of things in all affairs whatsoever.—For this is certain, that a proposition may be evidently true, or we may have good reason to receive it as true, though the particular propositions that depend upon it, and follow from it, may be such, that our reason, independent of it, cannot see the truth, or can see it to be true by no other means, than by first establishing that other truth on which it depends. For otherwise, there is an end of all use of our reasoning powers; an end of all arguing one proposition from another; and nothing is to be judged true, but what appears true by looking on it directly and immediately, without the help of another proposition first established, on

which the evidence of it depends.—For therein consists all reasoning or argumentation whatsoever; *viz.* in discovering the truth of a proposition, whose truth does not appear to our reason immediately, or when we consider it alone, but by the help of some other proposition, on which it depends.

§ 2. If this be not allowed, we must believe nothing at all, but self-evident propositions, and then we must have done with all such things as arguments: and all argumentation whatsoever, and all Tindal's argumentations in particular, are absurd. He himself, throughout his whole book, proceeds in that very method which this principle explodes. He argues and attempts to make evident, one proposition by another first established.—There are some general propositions, the truth of which can be known only by reason, from whence an infinite multitude of other propositions are inferred, and reasonably and justly determined to be true, and rested in as such, on the ground of the truth of that general proposition from which they are inferred by the common consent of all mankind, being led thereto by the common and universal sense of the human mind. And yet not one of those propositions can be known to be true by reason, if reason consider them by themselves independently of that general proposition.

Thus, for instance, what numberless truths are known only by consequence from that general proposition, that the testimony of our senses may be depended on? The truth of numberless particular propositions, cannot be known by reason, considered independently of the testimony of our senses, and without an implicit faith in that testimony. That general truth, that the testimony of our memories is worthy of credit, can be proved only by reason; and yet, what numberless truths are there, which we know no other way, and cannot be known to be true by reason, considering the truths in themselves, or any otherwise than by testimony of our memory, and an implicit faith in this testimony? That the agreed testimony of all we see, and converse with continually, is to be credited, is a general proposition, the truth of which can be known only by reason. And yet how infinitely numerous propositions do men receive as truth, that cannot be known to be true by reason, viewing them separately from such testimony; even all occurrences, and matters of fact, persons, things, actions, works, events, and circumstances, that we are told of in our neighbourhood, in our own country, or in any other part of the world that we have not seen ourselves.

§ 3. That the testimony of history and tradition is to be depended on, when attended with such and such credible circumstances, is a general proposition, whose truth can be known only by reason. And yet, how numberless are the particular truths concerning what has been before the present age, that

cannot be known by reason considered in themselves, and separately from this testimony, which yet are truths on which all mankind do, ever did, and ever will rely?

That the experience of mankind is to be depended on; or, that those things which the world finds to be true by experience, are worthy to be judged true, is a general proposition, of which none doubt. By what the world finds true by experience, can be meant nothing else, than what is known to be true by one or other of those fore-mentioned kinds of testimony, *viz.* the testimony of history and tradition; the testimony of those we see and converse with; the testimony of our memories, and the testimony of our senses. I say, all that is known by the experience of mankind, is known only by one or more of these testimonies; excepting only the existence of that idea, or those few ideas, which are at this moment present in our minds, or are the immediate objects of present consciousness. And yet, how unreasonable would it be to say, that we must first know those things to be true by reason, before we give credit to our experience of the truth of them! Not only are there innumerable truths, that are reasonably received as following from such general propositions as have been mentioned, which cannot be known by reason, if they are considered by themselves, or otherwise than as inferred from these general propositions; but also, many truths are reasonably received, and are received by the common consent of the reason of all rational persons, as undoubted truths, whose truth not only would not otherwise be discoverable by reason, but, when they are discovered by their consequence from that general proposition, appear in themselves not easy, and reconcilable to reason, but difficult, incomprehensible, and their agreement with reason not understood. So that men, at least most men, are not able to explain, or conceive of the manner in which they are agreeable to reason.

§ 4. Thus, for instance, it is a truth, which depends on that general proposition, that credit is to be given to the testimony of our senses, that our souls and bodies are so united, that they act on each other. But it is a truth which reason otherwise cannot discover, and, now that it is revealed by the testimony of our senses, reason cannot comprehend, that what is immaterial, and not solid nor extended, can act upon matter. Or, if any choose to say, that the soul is material, then other difficulties arise as great. For reason cannot imagine any way, that a solid mass of matter, whether at rest or in motion, should have perception, should understand, and should exert thought and volition, love, hatred, &c. And if it be said that spirit acts on matter, and matter on spirit, by an established law of the Creator, which is no other than a fixed method of his producing effects; still the manner how it is possible to be, will be inconceivable. We can have no conception of any way or

manner, in which God, who is a pure Spirit, can act upon matter, and impel it.

There are several things in mechanics and hydrostatics, that by the testimony of our senses are true in fact, not only that reason never first discovered before the testimony of sense declared them. but, now they are declared, are very great paradoxes, and, if proposed, would seem contrary to reason, at least to the reason of the generality of mankind, and such as are not either mathematicians, or of more than common penetration, and what they cannot reconcile to their reason. But God has given reason to the common people, to be as much their guide and rule, as he has to mathematicians and philosophers.

§ 5. Even the very existence of a sensible world, which we receive for certain from the testimony of our senses, is attended with difficulties and seeming inconsistencies with reason, which are insuperable to the reason at least of most men. For, if there be a sensible world, that world exists either *in* the mind only, or *out* of the mind, independent of its imagination or perception. If the *latter*, then that sensible world is some material substance, altogether diverse from the ideas we have by any of our senses—as *colour*, or *visible* extension and figure, which is nothing but the quantity of colour and its various limitations, which are sensible qualities that we have by *sight;* and *solidity*, which is an idea we have by *feeling;* and *extension* and *figure*, which is only the quantity and limitation of these; and so of all other qualities.—But that there should be any substance entirely distinct from any, or all of these, is utterly inconceivable. For, if we exclude all colour, solidity, or conceivable extension, dimension and figure, what is there left, that we can conceive of? Is there not a removal on our minds of all existence, and a perfect emptiness of every thing?

But, if it be said, that the sensible world has no existence, but only *in the mind*, then the sensories themselves, or the organs of sense, by which sensible ideas are let into the mind; have no existence but only in the mind; and those organs of sense have no existence but what is conveyed into the mind by themselves; for they are a part of the sensible world. And then it will follow, that the organs of sense owe their existence to the organs of sense, and so are prior to themselves, being the causes or occasions of their own existence; which is a seeming inconsistence with reason, that, I imagine, the reason of all men cannot explain and remove.

§ 6. There are innumerable propositions, that we reasonably receive from the testimony of experience, all depending on the truth of that general proposition, "that experience is to be relied on," (what is meant by experience has been already explained,) that yet are altogether above reason. They are pa-

radoxes attended with such seeming inconsistencies, that reason cannot clearly remove, nor fully explain the mystery.

By experience we know that there is such a thing as thought, love, hatred, &c. But yet this is attended with inexplicable difficulties. If there be such a thing as thought and affection, where are they? If they exist, they exist in some place, or no place. That they should exist, and exist in no place, is above our comprehension. It seems a contradiction, to say, they exist, and yet exist nowhere. And, if they exist in some place, then they are not in other places, or in all places; and therefore must be confined, at one time, to one place, and that place must have certain limits; from whence it will follow, that thought, love, &c. have some figure, either round, or square, or triangular; which seems quite disagreeable to reason, and utterly inconsonant to the nature of such things as thought and the affections of the mind.

§ 7. It is evident, by experience, that *something now is*. But this proposition is attended with things that reason cannot comprehend, paradoxes that seem contrary to reason. For, if something now *is*, then either something was from all eternity; or, something began to be, without any cause or reason of its existence. The *last* seems wholly inconsistent with natural sense: And the *other*, viz. That something has been from all eternity, implies, that there has been a duration past, which is without any beginning, which is an infinite duration: which is perfectly inconceivable, and is attended with difficulties that seem contrary to reason. For we cannot conceive how an infinite duration can be made greater, any more than how a line of infinite length can be made longer. But yet we see that past duration is continually added to. If there were a duration passed without beginning, a thousand years ago, then that past infinite duration has now a thousand years added to it: and if so, it is greater than it was before by a thousand years; because the whole is greater than a part. Now, the past duration consists of two parts, *viz.* that which was before the last thousand years, and that which is since. Thus here are seeming contradictions, involved in this supposition of an infinite duration past.

And, moreover, if something has been from eternity, it is either an endless succession of causes and effects, as for instance an endless succession of fathers and sons, or something equivalent; but the supposition is attended with manifold apparent contradictions; or, there must have been some eternal self-existent being, having the reasons of his existence within himself: or, he must have existed from eternity, without any reason of his existence; both which are inconceivable. That a thing should exist from eternity, without any reason why it should be so, rather than otherwise, is altogether inconceivable, and seems

quite repugnant to reason. And why a being should be self-existent, and have the reason of his existence within himself, seems also inconceivable, and never, as I apprehend, has yet been explained. If there has been any thing from eternity, then that past eternity is either an endless duration of successive parts as successive hours, minutes, &c. or it is an eternal duration without succession.—The latter seems repugnant to reason, and incompatible with any faculty of understanding that we enjoy: and, the other, an infinite number of successive parts, involves the very same contradictions with the supposition of an eternal succession of fathers and sons.

That the world has existed *from eternity without a cause*, seems wholly inconsistent with reason. In the first place, it is inconsistent with reason, that it should exist without a cause. For it is evident, that it is not a thing, the nature and manner of which is necessary in itself; and therefore it requires a cause or reason out of itself, why it is so, and not otherwise. And in the next place, if it exists from eternity, then succession has been from eternity; which involves the fore-mentioned contradictions. But, if it be without a cause, and does not exist from eternity, then it has been created out of nothing; which is altogether inconceivable, and what reason cannot show to be possible; and many of the greatest philosophers have supposed it plainly inconsistent with reason.—Many other difficulties might be mentioned as following from that proposition, "that something now is," that are insuperable to reason.

§ 8. It is evident, by *experience*, that *great evil*, both moral and natural, *abounds in the world*. It is manifest, that great injustice, violence, treachery, perfidiousness, and extreme cruelty to the innocent, abound in the world; as well as innumerable extreme sufferings, issuing finally in destruction and death, are general all over the world, in all ages.—But this could not *otherwise* have been known by reason; and even now is attended with difficulties, which the reason of many, yea most of the learned men and greatest philosophers that have been in the world, have not been able to surmount. That it should be so ordered or permitted in a world, absolutely and perfectly under the care and government of an infinitely holy and good God, discovers a seeming repugnancy to reason, that few, if any, have been able fully to remove.

§ 9. That *men are to be blamed or commended for their good or evil voluntary actions*, is a general proposition received, with good reason, by the dictates of the natural, common, and universal moral sense of mankind in all nations and ages; which moral sense is included in what Tindal means by reason and the law of nature. And yet many things attend this truth, that appear difficulties and seeming repugnancies to reason, which have proved altogether insuperable to the reason of many of the greatest and most learned men in the world.

§ 10. I observe, further, that when any general proposition is recommended to us as true, by any testimony or evidence, that, considered by itself, seems sufficient, without contrary testimony or evidence to countervail it; and difficulties attend that proposition: if these difficulties are no greater, and of no other sort, than what might reasonably be expected to attend true propositions of that kind, then these difficulties are not only no valid or sufficient objection against that proposition, but they are no objection at all.

Thus, there are many things, that I am told concerning the effects of electricity, magnetism, &c. and many things that are recorded in the philosophical transactions of the Royal Society, which I have never seen, and are very mysterious: but, being well attested, their mysteriousness is no manner of objection against my belief of the accounts; because, from what I have observed, and do know, such a mysteriousness is no other than is to be expected in a particular, exact observation of nature, and a critical tracing of its operations. It is to be expected, that the further it is traced, the more mysteries will appear. To apply this to the case in hand: If the difficulties which attend that which is recommended by good proof or testimony to our reception, as a divine revelation, are no greater, nor of any other nature, than such as, all things considered, might reasonably be expected to attend a revelation of such a sort, of things of such a nature, and given for such ends and purposes, and under such circumstances; these difficulties not only are not of weight sufficient to balance the testimony or proof that recommends it, but they are of no weight at all as objections against the revelation. They are not reasonably to be looked upon as of the nature of arguments against it; but on the contrary, may, with good reason, be looked upon as confirmations, and of the nature of arguments in its favour.

§ 11. This is very evident, and the reason of it very plain. For, certainly, whatever is reasonably expected to be found in a truth, when we are seeking it, cannot be an objection against that truth, when we have found it. If it be reasonably expected in truth beforehand, then reason unites it with truth, as one property of that sort of truth: and, if so, then reason unites it with the truth, after it is found. Whatever reason determines to be a property of any kind of truth, that is properly looked upon in some degree as a mark of truths of that sort, or as belonging to the marks and evidences of it: for things are known by their properties. Reason determines truth by things which reason determines to be the properties of truth. And if we do not find such things belonging to supposed truth, that were before reasonably expected in truth of that kind, this is an objection against it, rather than the finding of them. The disappointment of reason is rather an objection with reason, than something to induce its acceptance and acquiescence.

If the expectation be reasonable, then the not answering of it must so far appear unreasonable, or against reason, and so an objection in the way of reason.

Thus, if any one that is in search for things of a certain kind, reasonably expects beforehand, that if he be successful in finding the thing, of the kind and quality that he is in search of, he shall find it possessed of certain properties: when he hath actually found something, with all those properties and circumstances that he expected, he receives it, and rests in it so much the more entirely, as the very thing that he was in quest of. And surely, it would be no argument with him, that his invention is right, that some things, that he reasonably expected, are wanting: but on the contrary, this would rather be an objection with his reason.

§ 12. In order to judge what sort of difficulties are to be expected in a revelation made to mankind by God, such as Christians suppose the scriptures to be, we must remember, that it is a revelation of what God knows to be the very truth concerning his own nature; of the acts and operations of his mind with respect to his creatures; of the grand scheme of infinite wisdom in his works, especially with respect to the intelligent and moral world; a revelation of the spiritual and invisible world; a revelation of that invisible world which men shall belong to after this life; a revelation of the greatest works of God, the manner of his creating the world, and of his governing of it, especially with regard to the higher and more important parts of it; a revelation delivered in ancient languages.

Difficulties and incomprehensible mysteries are reasonably to be expected in a declaration from God, of the precise truth as he knows it, in matters of a spiritual nature; as we see things that are invisible, and not the objects of any of the external senses, are very mysterious, involved much more in darkness, attended with more mystery and difficulty to the understanding, than others; as many things concerning even the nature of our own souls themselves, that are the nearest to us, and the most intimately present with us, and so most in our view, of any spiritual things whatsoever.

The farther things are from the nature of what language is chiefly formed to express, *viz.* things appertaining to the common business and vulgar affairs of life—things obvious to sense and men's direct view and most vulgar observation, without speculation, reflection and abstraction—the more difficult it is clearly to express them in words. Our expressions concerning them, will be attended with greater abstruseness, difficulty, and seeming inconsistence; language not being well fitted to express these things; words and phrases not being prepared for that end. Such a reference to sensible and vulgar things, is unavoidably introduced, that naturally confounds the mind, and involves it in darkness.

§ 13. If God gives a revelation of religious things, it must be mainly concerning the affairs of the moral and intelligent universe: which is the grand system of spirits: it must be chiefly about himself and intelligent creatures. It may well be supposed, that a revelation concerning another and an invisible world, a future state that we are to be in when separated from the body, should be attended with much mystery. It may well be supposed, that the things of such a world, are of an exceeding different nature from the things of this world, the things of sense, and all the objects and affairs which earthly language was made to express: and that they are not agreeable to such notions, imaginations, and ways of thinking that grow up with us, and are connatural to us, as we are from our infancy formed to an agreeableness to the things which we are conversant with in this world. We could not conceive of the things of *sense*, if we had never had these external senses. And, if we had only some of these senses, and not others; as, for instance, if we had only a sense of feeling, without the senses of seeing and hearing, how mysterious would a declaration of things of these last senses be! Or, if we had feeling and hearing, but had been born without eyes or optic nerves, the things of light, even when declared to us, would many of them be involved in mystery, and would appear exceedingly strange to us.

§ 14. Thus persons without the sense of seeing, but who had the other senses, might be informed by all about them, that they can perceive things at a distance, and perceive as plainly, and in some respects more plainly, than by touching them; yea, that they could perceive things at so great a distance, that it would take up many ages to travel to them. They might be informed of many things concerning colours, that would be all perfectly incomprehensible, and yet might be believed; and it could not be said that nothing at all is proposed to their belief, because they have no idea of colour.

They might be told that they perceive an extension, a length and breadth of colour, and terminations and limits, and so a figure of this kind of extension: and yet, that it is nothing that can be felt. This would be perfectly mysterious to them, and would seem an inconsistence, as they have no ideas of any such things as length, breadth, and limits, and figure of extension, but only certain ideas they have by touch. They might be informed, that they could perceive *at once* the extent and shape of a thing so great and multiform as a tree, without touch: this would seem very strange and impossible.—They might be told, that, to those who see, some things appear a thousand times as great as some others, which yet are made up of more visible parts, than those others: which would be very mysterious, and seem quite inconsistent with reason.—

These, and many other things, would be attended with unsearchable mystery to them, concerning objects of sight; and, concerning which, they could never fully see how they can be reconciled to reason; at least, not without very long, particular, gradual, and elaborate instruction; and which, after all, they would not fully comprehend, so as clearly to see how the ideas connected in these propositions do agree.—And yet I suppose, in such a case, the most rational persons, would give full credit to things that they know not by reason, but only by the revelation of the word of those that see. I suppose, a person born blind in the manner described, would nevertheless give full credit to the united testimony of the seeing world, in things which they said about light and colours, and would entirely rest on their testimony.

§ 15. If God give us a revelation of the truth, not only about spiritual beings in an unseen state; but also concerning a spiritual being or beings of a superior kind, (and so of an unexperienced nature,) entirely diverse from any thing we now experience in our present state,—and from any thing that we can be conscious of in any state whatsoever—then, especially, may mysteries be expected in such a revelation.

The truth concerning any kind of percipient being, of a different nature from our own, though of a kind inferior, might well be supposed to be attended with difficulty, by reason of its diversity from what we are conscious of in ourselves: but much more so, when the nature and kind is superior. For a superior perceptive nature may well be supposed, in some respects, to include and comprehend what belongs to an inferior, as the greater comprehends the less, and the whole includes a part; and therefore, what the superior experiences may give him advantage to conceive of concerning the nature of the inferior. But, on the contrary, an inferior nature does not include what belongs to a superior. When one of an inferior nature considers what concerns beings of a nature entirely above his own, there is something belonging to it that is over and above all that the inferior nature is conscious of.

A very great superiority, even in beings of the same nature with ourselves, sets them so much above our reach, that many of their affairs become incomprehensible, and attended with inexplicable intricacies. Thus many of the affairs of adult persons are incomprehensible, and appear inexplicably strange to the understandings of little children: and many of the affairs of learned men, and great philosophers and mathematicians, things with which they are conversant, and well acquainted, are far above the reach of the vulgar, and appear to them not only unintelligible, but absurd and impossible, and full of inconsistencies. But much more may this be expected when the superiority is not only in the degree of improvement of faculties

and properties of the same kind of beings, but also in the nature itself. So that, if there be a kind of created perceptive beings, in their nature vastly superior to the human, which none will deny to be possible, and a revelation should be given us concerning the nature, acts, and operations of this kind of creatures; it would be no wonder, if such a revelation should contain some things very much out of our reach, attended with great difficulty to our reason, being things of such a kind, that no improvement of our minds, that we are capable of, will bring us to an experience of any thing like them. But, above all, if a revelation be made to us concerning that being who is uncreated and self-existent, who is infinitely diverse from and above all others, in his nature, and so infinitely above all that any advancement of our nature can give us any consciousness of: in such a revelation, it would be very strange indeed, if there should not be some great mysteries, quite beyond our comprehension, and attended with difficulties which it is impossible for us fully to solve and explain.

§ 16. It may well be expected, that a revelation of truth, concerning an infinite being, should be attended with mystery. We find, that the reasonings and conclusions of the best metaphysicians and mathematicians, concerning infinites, are attended with paradoxes and seeming inconsistencies. Thus it is concerning infinite lines, surfaces and solids, which are things external. But much more may this be expected in infinite spiritual things; such as infinite thought, infinite apprehension, infinite reason, infinite will, love, and joy, infinite spiritual power, agency, &c.

Nothing is more certain, than that there *must* be an unmade and unlimited being; and yet, the very notion of such a being is all mystery, involving nothing but incomprehensible paradoxes, and seeming inconsistencies. It involves the notion of a being, self-existent and without any cause, which is utterly inconceivable, and seems repugnant to all our ways of conception. An infinite spiritual being, or infinite understanding and will and spiritual power, must be omnipresent, without extension; which is nothing but mystery and seeming inconsistence.

The notion of an infinite eternal, implies absolute immutability. That which is in all respects infinite, absolutely perfect, to the utmost degree, and at all times, cannot be in any respect variable. And this immutability being constant from eternity implies duration without succession, and is wholly a mystery and seeming inconsistence. It seems as much as to say, an infinitely great or long duration all at once, or all in a moment; which seems to be saying, an infinitely great in an infinitely little; or an infinitely long line in a point without any length.

§ 17. Infinite understanding, which implies an understanding of all things past, present and future; and of all truth and all

reason and argument, implies infinite thought and reason. But, how this can be absolutely without mutation, or succession of acts, seems mysterious and absurd. We can conceive of no such thing as thinking, without successive acting of the mind about ideas. Perfect knowledge of all things, even of all the things of external sense, without any sensation, or any reception of ideas from without, is an inconceivable mystery. Infinite knowledge, implies a perfect comprehensive view of a whole future eternity; which seems utterly impossible. For, how can there be any reaching of the whole of this to comprehend it without reaching to the utmost limits of it? But this cannot be, where there is no such thing as utmost limits. And again, if God perfectly views an eternal succession or chain of events, then he perfectly sees every individual part of that chain, and there is no one link of it hid from his sight. And yet there is no one link that has not innumerable links beyond it; from which it would seem to follow, that there is a link beyond all the links that he sees, and consequently, that there is one link, yea, innumerable links, that he sees not; inasmuch as there are innumerable links beyond every one that he sees. And many other such seeming contradictions might be mentioned, which attend the supposition of God's omniscience.

If there be absolutely immutability in God, then there never arises any new act in God, or new exertion of himself; and yet there arise new effects: which seems an utter inconsistence. And so innumerable other such like mysteries and paradoxes are involved in the notion of an infinite and eternal intelligent being. Insomuch, that if there had never been any *revelation*, by which God had made known himself by his word to mankind; the most speculative persons would, without doubt, have for ever been exceedingly at a loss concerning the nature of the Supreme Being and first cause of the universe. And that some of the ancient philosophers and wiser Heathens had so good notions of God as they had, seems to be much more owing to tradition, which originated from divine revelation, than from their own invention; though human nature served to keep those traditions alive in the world, and led the more considerate to embrace and retain the imperfect traditions which were to be found in any parts remaining as they appeared, when once suggested and delivered agreeable to reason.

§ 18. If a revelation be made of the principal scheme of the supreme and infinitely wise Ruler respecting his moral kingdom, wherein his all-sufficient wisdom is displayed, in the case of its greatest trial; ordering and regulating the said moral kingdom to its great ends, when in the most difficult circumstances; extricating it out of the most extreme calamities, in which it had been involved by the malice and subtilty of the chief and most crafty of all God's enemies, should we expect

no mysteries? If it be the principal of all the effects of the wisdom of him, the depth of whose wisdom is unsearchable and absolutely infinite; his deepest scheme, by which mainly the grand design of the universal, incomprehensibly complicated system of all his operations, and the infinite series of his administrations, is most happily, completely and gloriously attained; the scheme in which God's wisdom is mainly exercised and displayed: it may reasonably be expected, that such a revelation will contain *many* mysteries.

We see that to be the case, even as to many works of human wisdom and art. They appear strange, paradoxical, and incomprehensible, by those that are vastly inferior in sagacity, or are entirely destitute of that skill or art. How are many of the effects of human art attended with many things that appear strange and altogether incomprehensible by children, and many others seeming to be beyond and against nature; and in many cases, the effect produced not only seems to be beyond the power of any visible means, but inconsistent with it, being an effect contrary to what would be expected: the means seems inconsistent with the end.

§ 19. If God reveal the exact truth in those things which, in the language of the Heathen sages, are matters of philosophy, especially, things concerning the nature of the Deity, and the nature of man as related to the Deity, &c. it may most reasonably be expected, that such a revelation should contain many mysteries and paradoxes, considering how many mysteries the doctrines of the greatest and best philosophers, in all ages, concerning these things, have contained; or at least, how very mysterious, and seemingly repugnant they are to the reason of the vulgar, and persons of less understanding; and considering how mysterious the principles of philosophers, even concerning matters far inferior to these, would have appeared in any former age, if they had been revealed to be true, which however are now received as the most undoubted truths.

If God gives mankind his word in a large book, consisting of a vast variety of parts, many books, histories, prohecies, prayers, songs, parables, proverbs, doctrines, promises, sermons, epistles, and discourses of very many kinds, all connected together, all united in one grand drift and design; and one part having a various and manifold respect to others; so as to become one great work of God, and one grand system; as is the system of the universe, with its vast variety of parts connected in one grand work of God: it may well be expected that there should be mysteries, things incomprehensible and exceeding difficult to our understanding; analogous to the mysteries that are found in all the other works of God, as the works of creation and providence; and particularly such as are analogous to

the mysteries that are observable in the system of the natural world, and the frame of man's own nature.

§ 20. If it be still objected, that it is peculiarly unreasonable that mysteries should be supposed in a revelation given to mankind; because, if there be such a revelation, the direct and principal design of it must be, to teach mankind, and to inform their understandings, which is inconsistent with its delivering things to man which he cannot understand; and which do not inform but only puzzle and confound his understanding: I answer,

1*st.* Men are capable of understanding as much as is pretended to be revealed; though they cannot understand all that belongs to the things revealed. For instance, God may reveal, that there are three who have the same nature of the Deity, whom it is most proper for us to look upon as three persons; though the particular *manner* of their distinction, or how they differ, may not be revealed. He may reveal that the Godhead was united to man, so as to be properly looked upon as the same person; and yet not reveal *how* it was effected.

2*d.* No allowance is made in the objection, for what may be understood of the word of God in future ages, which is not now understood. And it is to be considered, that divine revelation is not given only for the present or past ages.

3*d.* The seeming force of this objection, lies wholly in this, that we must suppose whatever God does, tends to answer the end for which he does it; but that those parts of a revelation which *we* cannot understand, do not answer the end, inasmuch as informing our understandings is the very end of a revelation, if there be any such thing.

§ 21. But this objection is no other, than just equivalent to an objection which may be made against many parts of the *creation*, particularly of this lower world. It is apparent, the most direct and principal end of this lower world was, to be for the habitation, use, and benefit of mankind, the head of this lower world. But there are some parts of it that seem to be of no use to man, but are rather inconvenient and prejudicial to him; as, the innumerable stones and rocks that overspread so great a part of the earth, which as to any thing known, are altogether useless, and oftentimes are rather an inconvenience than benefit.

Thus, it is reasonable to expect, that, in such a revelation, there should be many things plain and easy to be understood; and that the revelation should be most intelligible, wherein it is most necessary for us to understand it, in order to our guidance and direction in the way to our happiness; but that there should also be many incomprehensible mysteries in it, many things understood in part, but yet that room should be left for vast improvement in the knowledge of them, to the end of the world. It is reasonable to expect, that the case should actually be the same as concerning the works of nature:

that many things which were formerly great and insuperable difficulties, unintelligible mysteries, should now, by further study and improvement, be well cleared up, and cease longer to remain difficulties; and that other difficulties should be considerably diminished, though not yet fully cleared up.

It may be expected that, as in the system of nature so in the system of revelation, there should be many parts whose use is but little understood, and many that should seem wholly useless, yea, and some that should seem rather to do hurt than good. I might further observe, that if we have a revelation given in ancient languages, used among a people whose customs and phraseology are but very imperfectly understood, many difficulties will arise from hence. And, in a very concise history, in which only some particular facts and circumstances that concern the special purpose of that revelation, are mentioned—and innumerable others are omitted that would be proper to be mentioned, if the main design were to give a full, clear, connected, continued history of such a people, or such affairs as the history mentions—it is no wonder that many doubts and difficulties arise.

§ 22. Tindal's main argument against the need of any revelation, is, that the *law of nature is absolutely perfect.* But how weak and impertinent is this arguing, that because the *law of nature* (which is no other than natural rectitude and obligation) is perfect, therefore the *light of nature* is sufficient. To say, that the law of nature is perfect, yea, absolutely perfect, is no more than to say, that what is naturally fit and right in itself, is indeed right; and that what is in itself, or in its own nature perfectly and absolutely right, is absolutely right. But this is an empty, insipid kind of doctrine. It is an idle way of spending time, ink, and paper, to spend them in proving, that what is in its own nature perfectly true, is perfectly true; and what is in its nature perfectly good, is perfectly good; or that what is, is, and is as it is. But this is all that can be meant by the law of nature being perfect.

And how far is this from having any reference to that question, whether we have by mere nature, without instruction, all that light and advantage that we need, clearly and fully to know what is right, and all that is needful for us to be and to do, in our circumstances as sinners, &c. in order to the forgiveness of sin, the favour of God, and our own happiness? What, according to the nature of things, is fittest and best, may be most perfect; and yet our natural knowledge of this, may be most imperfect.

If Tindal, or any other deist, would assert, and urge it upon mankind as an assertion that they ought to believe, that the light of nature is so sufficient to teach all mankind what they *ought*, or in any respect *need* to be, and to believe and practise

for their good, that any additional instruction is needless and useless: then, all instruction in families and schools is needless and useless; all instruction of parents, tutors, and philosophers; all that has been said to promote any such knowledge as tends to make men good and happy by word of mouth, or by writing and books; all that is written by ancient and modern philosophers and learned men; and then, also, all the pains the deists take in talking and writing to enlighten mankind, is wholly needless and vain.

§ 23. When it is asserted that the light of nature, or the means and advantages which all mankind have by pure nature, to know the way of their duty and happiness, are absolutely sufficient, without any additional means and advantages; one of these two things must be meant by it, if it has any meaning; either that they are sufficient in order to a mere possibility of obtaining all needful and useful knowledge in these important concerns; or that these natural means have a sufficient tendency actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or at least in a prevailing degree, according as the state of mankind may be.

If the former of these be meant, *viz.* that the means of understanding these things, which all mankind have by mere nature, is sufficient, in order to a bare possibility of obtaining this knowledge: even that, should it be allowed, will not at all prove, that further light is not extremely needed by mankind. A bare *possibility* may be; and yet there may be no tendency or *probability* that ever the effect (however necessary, and however dreadful the consequence of its failing) will be reached, in one single instance, in the whole world of mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, though it should stand millions of ages.

But if by the sufficiency of these natural means be meant, a *sufficiency of tendency* actually to reach the effect—either universally, or in a prevailing degree, considering all things belonging to the state and circumstances of mankind—it is the very same thing as to say, that it *actually* does obtain the effect. For, if the tendency, all things considered, be sufficient actually to obtain the effect, doubtless it does actually obtain it. For, what should hinder a cause from actually obtaining the effect that it has a sufficient tendency to obtain, all things considered? So that here, what we have to inquire, is, whether that effect be actually obtained in the world? whether the world of mankind be actually brought to all necessary or very important knowledge of these things, merely by the means they have by nature? History, observation, and experience, are the things which must determine the question.

§ 24. In order the more clearly to judge of this matter, of the sufficiency of the light of nature to know what is necessary

to be known of religion in order to man's happiness, we must consider what are the things that must be known in order to this; which are these two: 1*st*. The religion of nature, or the religion proper and needful, considering the state and relations we stand in as creatures: 2*d*. The religion of a sinner, or the religion and duties proper and necessary for us, considering our state as depraved and guilty creatures, having incurred the displeasure of our Creator.

As to the former, it is manifest from *fact;* that nature alone is not sufficient for the discovery of the religion of nature, in the *latter* sense of sufficiency: that is, no means we have by mere nature, without instruction, bring men to the knowledge of the nature of God, and our natural relation to, and dependence on him, and the consequent relations we stand in to our fellow-creatures, and the duties becoming these relations, sufficient actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or in any prevailing degree. No; nor does it appear to have proved sufficient so much as in a single instance. A sufficiency to see the reasonableness of these things, when pointed out, is not the same thing as a sufficiency to find them out. None but either mere dunces, or those who are incorrigibly wilful, will deny that there is a vast difference.

And as to the latter, *viz*. the religion of a *sinner*, or the duties proper and necessary for us as depraved, guilty, and offending creatures; it is most evident, the light of nature cannot be sufficient for our information, by any means, or in any sense whatsoever. No, nor is the law of nature sufficient either to prescribe or establish this religion. The light of nature is, in no sense whatsoever, sufficient to discover this religion. It has no sufficient tendency to it; nor, indeed, any tendency at all to discover it to any one single person in any age. And it not only has no tendency to the obtaining of this knowledge, by mere natural means, but it affords no *possibility* of it.—Not only is the *light* of nature insufficient to discover this religion, but the *law* of nature is not sufficient to establish it, or to give any room for it.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the Medium of moral Government—particularly Conversation.

§ 1. By *conversation*, I mean intelligent beings expressing their minds one to another, in words, or other signs intentionally directed to us for our notice, whose immediate and main design is to be significations of the mind of him who gives them. Those signs are evidences distinguished from

works done by any, from which we may argue their minds. The first and most immediate design of the work is something else than a mere signification to us of the mind of the efficient. Thus, I distinguish God's communicating his mind to us by word or conversation, from his giving us opportunity to learn it by philosophical reasoning; or, by God's works which we observe in the natural world.

§ 2. There is a great difference between God's *moral* government of his creatures, that have understanding and will, and his general government of providential disposal.—The nature, design, and ends of the latter, by no means require that it should be declared and made visible by a revelation of the methods, rules, particular views, designs, and ends of it: these are secret things that belong to God; in which men's understandings and wills are no way concerned. There is no application to these faculties in it; nor are these faculties any otherwise concerned, than the qualities or properties of inanimate and senseless things.

But it is quite otherwise with respect to God's moral government of a kingdom or society of intelligent and willing creatures; to which society he is united as its head, ruling for its good. The nature of that requires, that it should be declared, open and visible. How can any moral government be properly and sufficiently established and maintained in a kingdom of intelligent agents, consisting in exhibiting, prescribing, and enforcing methods, rules, and ends of their own intelligent voluntary actions, without declaring, and particularly promulgating to their understandings, those methods, rules, and enforcements? The moral government of a society, in the very nature of it, implies, and consists in an application to their understandings, in directing the intelligent will, and enforcing the direction by the declaration made.

§ 3. It is needful, in order to a proper moral government, that the ruler should enforce the rules of the society, by threatening just punishments, and promising the most suitable and wise rewards. But without word or voluntary declaration, there is no threatening or promising in the case, in a proper sense. To leave the subject to find out what reward would be wise, if there appear in the state of things room for every subject to guess at it in some degree, would be a different thing from *promising* it. And to leave men to their own reason, to find out what would be a just, deserved, and, all things considered, a wise punishment, though we should suppose some sufficiency in every one's reason for this, would be a different thing from *threatening* of it.

It is needful in a moral kingdom, not in a ruined and deserted state—the union between the head and members remaining—that there should be conversation between the go-

vernors and governed. It it requisite that the former should have intercourse with the latter in a way agreeable to their nature; that is by way of *voluntary signification* of their mind to the governed, as the governed signify their minds voluntarily one to another. There should be something equivalent to conversation between the rulers and ruled; and thus the rulers should make themselves visible. The designs and ends of government should be made known; it should be visible what is aimed at, and what grand ends or events are in view, and the mind of the rulers should be declared as to the rules, measures, and methods, to be observed by the society. If the rulers are sovereign, absolute disposers, it is necessary their will should be particularly declared, as to the good and evil consequence of obedience or disobedience, which they intend as moral enforcements of the rules and laws, to persuade the will to a compliance. For they can reach the will, or affect it at all, no further than they are made known.—It is requisite something should be known, particularly, of the nature, weight, and degree of the rewards and punishments, and of their time, place, and duration.

§ 4. Thus, it is requisite that it should be declared what is the end for which God has made us, and made the world; supports it, provides for it, and orders its events. For what end mankind are made in particular; what is intended to be their main employment; what they should chiefly aim at in what they do in the world: how far God, the Creator, is man's end; and what man is to aim at with respect to God, who stands in no need of us, and cannot be in the least dependent on us: how far, and in what respect, we are to make God our highest end; and how we are to make ourselves, or our fellow-creatures, our end: what benefits man will have by complying with his end; what evils he shall be subject to by refusing, or failing so to comply, in a greater or lesser degree. If we have offended, and deserved punishment, it must be known on what terms (if at all) we may be forgiven and restored to favour; and what benefits we shall receive, if we are reconciled.

It is apparent, that there would be no hope that these things would ever be determined among mankind, in their present darkness and disadvantages, without a revelation. Without a revelation—now extant, or once extant, having some remaining influence by tradition—men would undoubtedly for ever be at a loss, what God expects from us, and what we may expect from him; what we are to depend upon as to our concern with God, and what ground we are to go upon in our conduct and proceedings that relate to him; what end we are to aim at; what rule we are to be directed by; and what good, and what harm, is to be expected from a right or wrong conduct. Yea, without a revelation, men would be greatly at a loss concern-

ing God; what he is; what manner of being; whether properly intelligent and willing; a being that has will and design, maintaining a proper, intelligent, voluntary dominion over the world. Notions of the first being, like those of Hobbes and Spinosa, would prevail. Especially would they be at a loss concerning those perfections of God, which he exercises as a moral governor. For we find that some of the deists, though they, from revelation, have been taught these; yet, having cast off revelation, apparently doubt of them all. Lord Bolingbroke, in particular, insists that we have no evidence of them.

§ 5. And though, with regard to many, when they have a revelation fully setting forth the perfections of God—giving a rational account of them, and pointing forth their consistence—their reason may rest satisfied in them; this is no evidence that it is not exceeding needful that God should tell us of them. It is very needful that God should declare to mankind what manner of being he is. For, though reason may be sufficient to confirm such a declaration after it is given, and enable us to see its consistence, harmony, and rationality, in many respects; yet reason may be utterly insufficient first to discover these things.

Yea, notwithstanding the clear and infinitely abundant evidences of his *being*, we need that God should tell us that there is a great Being, who *understands*, who *wills*, and who has made and governs the world. It is of unspeakable advantage, as to the *knowledge* of this, that God has told us of it; and there is much reason to think, that the notion mankind in general have entertained in all ages concerning a Deity, has been very much originally owing to revelation.

On the supposition, that God has a moral kingdom in the world, that he is the head of a moral society, consisting either of some part of mankind, or of the whole; in what darkness must the affairs of this moral kingdom be carried on, without a communication between the head and the body; the ruler never making himself known to the society by any word, or other equivalent expression whatsoever, either by himself, or by any mediators, or messengers?

§ 6. So far as we see, all moral agents are *conversible* agents. It seems to be so agreeable to the nature of moral agents, and their state in the universal system, that we observe none without it; and there are no beings that have even the semblance of intelligence and will, but possess the faculty of conversation; as in all kinds of birds, beasts, and even insects. So far as there is any appearance of something like a mind, so far they give *significations* of their minds one to another, in something like conversation among rational creatures. And, as we rise higher in the scale of beings, we do not see that an increase of perfection diminishes the need or propriety of communication

and intercourse of this kind, but augments it. And accordingly, we see most of it among the most perfect beings. So we see conversation by voluntary immediate significations of each other's minds, more fully, properly, and variously, between mankind, than any other animals here below. And if there are creatures superior to mankind united in society, doubtless still voluntary converse is more full and perfect.

Especially do we find conversation proper and requisite between intelligent creatures concerning *moral* affairs, which are most important: affairs wherein especially moral agents are concerned, as joined in society, and having union and communion one with another. As to other concerns that are merely personal and natural, wherein we are concerned more separately, and by ourselves, and not as members of society, in them there is not equal need of conversation.

§ 7. Moral agents are *social* agents; affairs of morality are affairs of society. It is concerning moral agents as united in society, in a commonwealth or kingdom, that we have been speaking. Particular moral agents so united, need conversation. The affairs of their social union cannot well be maintained without conversation. And if so, what reason can be given, why there should be no need of conversation with the head of the society? The head of the society, so far as it is united with it on a *moral* ground, is a social head. The head belongs to the society, as the natural head belongs to the body. And the union of the members with the head is greater, stricter, and more important, than one with another. And if their union with other members of the society require conversation, much more their greater union with the head. By all that we see and experience, the *moral* world, and the *conversible* world, are the same thing; and it never was intended, that the affairs of society, in any that are united in society among intelligent creatures, should be upheld and carried on without conversation.

There is no more reason to deny God any conversation with his moral kingdom, in giving laws, and enforcing them with promises and threatenings, than to deny him any conversation with them in another world, when judging them. But, can any that believe a future state, rationally imagine, that when men go into another world to be judged by their Supreme Governor, nothing will pass or be effected through the immediate interposition of the judge, but all things be left wholly to go on according to laws of nature established from the beginning of the world: and that souls pass into another state by a law of nature, as a stone, when shaken off from a building, falls down by gravity, without any miraculous signification from God? But there is as much reason to suppose this, as to deny any miraculous interposition in giving and establishing the laws of the

moral society. If judgment and execution by law, be by immediate interposition and declaration, why not legislation?

§ 8. The *ground* of moral behaviour, and all moral government and regulation, is society, or mutual intercourse and social regards. The special medium of union and communication of the members of the society, and the being of society as such, is conversation; and the well-being and happiness of society is friendship. It is the highest happiness of all moral agents; but friendship, above all other things that belong to society, requires conversation. It is what friendship most naturally and directly desires. By conversation, not only is friendship maintained and nourished, but the felicity of friendship is tasted and enjoyed. The happiness of God's moral kingdom consists, in an inferior degree, in the members' enjoyment of each other's friendship; but infinitely more in the enjoyment of their head. Therefore, here especially, and above all, is conversation requisite.

§ 9. Conversation between God and mankind in this world, is maintained by God's *word* on his part, and by *prayer* on ours. By the former, he speaks and expresses his mind to us; by the latter, we speak and express our minds to him. Sincere friendship towards God, in all who believe him to be properly an intelligent, willing being, does most apparently, directly and strongly, incline to prayer; and it no less disposes the heart strongly to desire to have our infinitely glorious and gracious Friend expressing his mind to us by his word, that we may know it. The same light which has directed the nations of the world in general to prayer, has directed them to suppose, that God, or the gods, have revealed themselves to men. And we see, that the same infidelity that disposes men to deny any divine revelation, disposes them to reject as absurd the duty of prayer.

§ 10. If God's moral kingdom, or the society of his friends and willing subjects, shall be in a most happy state in another world—in the most complete friendship, and in perfect union with God their head, as some of the deists pretend to believe—is it reasonable to suppose any other, than that they will fully enjoy the sweets of their friendship one with another, in the most perfect conversation, either by words, or some more perfect medium of expressing their minds? And shall they have at the same time, no conversation at all with their glorious head, the fountain of all the perfection and felicity of the society, in friendship with whom their happiness chiefly consists? That friendship, and the happiness they have in it, is begun in this world; and this is the state wherein they are trained up for that more perfect state: and shall they nevertheless live here wholly without any intercourse with God of

this sort; though their union with him, as their moral head, and their great friend, begins here; and though their happiness, as consisting in friendship to him, and also the enjoyment of that subordinate happiness of holding a virtuous and holy conversation one with another, be begun here? The need of conversation in order properly to support and carry on the concerns of *society*, may well appear, by considering the need of it for answering all the purposes of *friendship*, which is one of the main concerns of society, in some respects the main social concern, and the end of all the rest.

Let us suppose, that some friend, above all others dear to us, in whose friendship consisted the main comfort of our life, should leave us in possession of something he had contrived and accomplished, some manifold complicated effect that he had produced which we might have always in our view. Suppose also that this work should be a very great and manifold evidence of the excellencies of our friend's mind, of his great, fixed, and firm benevolence to us; and that he should withdraw for ever, and never have any conversation with us; that no word should ever pass, or any thing of that nature; and that no word should be left behind in writing, nor any word ever spoken left in the memory: would this sufficiently and completely answer the purposes of this great friendship, and satisfy its ends and desires, or be a proper support of this great end of society? I cannot but think, every sober, considerate person will at once determine, that it would be very far from it, for such reasons as these,—that it would not give us those views of things, pertaining to the support and enjoyment of friendship, suitable to the nature of intelligent, volitive, and conversible beings; not giving the direct and immediate view, nor at all tending, in so great a degree and so agreeable a manner, to affect and impress the mind. And as, for these reasons, this alone would not answer the ends and purposes of society in this respect; so, for the same reasons, it would not answer the other purposes of society.

§ 11. As we may suppose, that God will govern mankind, in that moral kingdom which he hath mercifully set up among them, in a manner agreeable to their nature; so it is reasonable to suppose, that he would make his moral government, with respect to them, *visible*, not only in declaring the *general* ends, methods, and rules of his government, but also by making known the chief of his more *particular* aims and designs. As in human kingdoms, in order to the wisdom, righteousness, and goodness of the administration being properly visible—so far as is requisite for encouraging and animating of the subject, and in order to the suitable convenience, satisfaction, and benefit of the whole society of intelligent agents—it is needful, not only that the general end, *viz.* the public good, should be

known, but also the particular design of many of the principal parts of the administration, among which we may reckon the main negociations, treaties, and changes of affairs, the cause and end of wars engaged in, the ground of treaties of peace and commerce, the design of general revolutions in the state of the kingdom, &c. Otherwise the society is not governed in a manner becoming their rational and active nature ; but affairs are carried on in the dark, and the members have no opportunity to consent or concur, to approve or disapprove, to rejoice in the goodness, wisdom, and benefit of the administration, and to pay proper regards to those in whose hands the government is, &c. These things are necessary for the establishment and confirmation of the government. God's moral government over his moral kingdom on earth, cannot, in such like respects, be carried on in a visible manner, and in a way suitable to our nature, without divine history and prophecy. Without divine history, we cannot properly see the grounds and foundation of divine administrations, the first formation or erection of God's moral kingdom, the nature and manner of the main revolutions to which it has been subject, which are the ground of future designs, and to which future events and intended revolutions have a relation. It is also necessary that those past events should be known, in order that the reason, wisdom, and benefit of the present state of the kingdom, and of God's present dispensations towards it, may be known. And prophecy is needful to reveal the future designs and aims of government, and what good things are to be expected.

These things are necessary, in order to the proper establishment, health and prosperity, of God's moral, intelligent kingdom. Without them, the government of an infinitely wise and good head, is not sensible. There is no opportunity to see the effects and success of the administration. There is no opportunity to find it by experience. Neither the designs of government, nor the accomplishment of those designs, are sensible ; and the government itself, with respect to fact, is not made visible.

§ 12. If it be said, that reason and the light of nature, without revelation, are sufficient to show us, that the end of God's government, in his moral kingdom, must be, to promote these two things among mankind, *viz.* their virtue and their happiness:

In reply, I would ask, What satisfaction can men without revelation have, with respect to the design, wisdom, and success of God's government, as to these ends, when wickedness so generally prevails and reigns, through all ages hitherto, in the far greater part of the world ; and the world, at all times, is so full of calamities, miseries, and death, having no prophecies of a better state of things in which all is to issue at last, in the latter ages of the world : or assuring us that all these miserable

changes and great confusion are guided by Infinite Wisdom to that great final issue, and without any revelation of a future state of happiness to the city of God in another world?

§ 13. *Object.* God does maintain a moral government over all mankind: but we see, in fact, that many are not governed by revelation, since the greater part of the world have been destitute of divine revelation: which shows that God does not look upon conversation as necessary in order to his moral government of mankind, as God judges for himself, and acts according to his own judgment.

Ans. 1. What I have been speaking of, is God's moral government over a society of moral agents, which are his kingdom, or a society that have God for their king, united to them as the head of the society; as it is with earthly kings with respect to their own kingdoms, where the union between king and subjects is not broken and dissolved; and not of a society or country of rebels, who have forsaken their lawful sovereign, withdrawn themselves from subjection to him, and cast off his government: though they may still be under the king's power, and moral dominion, in some sense, as he may have it in his power and design, to conquer, subdue, judge, and punish them for their rebellion. But yet the sense in which such a nation is under the moral government of this king, and may be said to be his kingdom or people, is surely extremely diverse from that of a kingdom remaining in union with their king. In the case of a people broken off from their king, maintaining of intercourse by conversation is in no wise in like manner requisite. The reasons for such intercourse, which take place in the other case, do not take place in this.

In that case, society ceases; *i. e.* that union ceases between God and man, by which they should be of one society. And where society ceases, there the argument for conversation ceases. If a particular member of the society were wholly cut off, and ceases to be of the society—the union being entirely broken—the argument for conversation, the great medium of social concerns, ceases. So if the body be cut off from the head, or be entirely disunited from it, intercourse ceases. Moral government in a society is a *social* affair; wherein consists the intercourse between superior and inferior constituents, between that which is original, and that which is dependent, directing and directed in the society. It is proper, in this case, that the rebel people should have sufficient means of knowing the end of their rebellion, and that it is their duty to be subject to their king, to seek reconciliation with him, and to inquire after his will. But while they remain obstinate in their rebellion, and the king has not received them into favour, the state of things does not require, that he should particularly declare his intentions with respect to them, or should open to

them the designs and methods of his administration. It is not necessary that he should publish among *them* the way and terms of reconciliation; make revelations of his goodness and wisdom and the great benefits of his government; converse with them as their friend, and so open the way for their being happy in so great a friend; or that he should so particularly and immediately publish among them, particular statutes and rules for their good, as a society of moral agents, &c. Conversation, in this sense, when there is an utter breach of the union, is not to be expected, nor is it requisite, though judging and condemning may.

Ans. 2. So far as the union between God and the Heathen world has not been utterly broken; so far they have not been left utterly destitute of all benefit of divine revelation. They are not so entirely and absolutely cast off, but that there is a possibility of their being reconciled; and God has so ordered the case, that there is an equal possibility of their receiving the benefit of divine revelation.

If the Heathen world, or any parts of it, have not only enjoyed a mere possibility of being restored to favour, but have had some advantages for it, so, a great part, yea, mostly the greater part of the Heathen world, have not been left merely to the light of nature. They have had many things, especially in the times of the Old Testament, that were delivered to mankind in the primitive ages of the world by revelation, handed down from their ancestors by tradition; and many things borrowed from the Jews. And, during those ages, by many wonderful dispensations towards the Jews—wherein God did in a most public and striking manner, display himself and show his hand—the world had, from time to time, notices sufficient to convince them, that there was a divine revelation extant, and sufficient to induce them to seek after it. And things sufficient to make revelation public, to spread it abroad—to extend the fame of it and its effects to the utmost end of the earth, and to draw men's attention to it—have been vastly more and greater in later times, than in the primitive ages.

Ans. 3. The nations that are separated from the true God, and live in an open and obstinate full rejection of him as their supreme moral Governor, reject all friendly intercourse while their state is such. They are open enemies; and, so far as God treats them as such, he does not exercise any friendly moral government over them. And they have light sufficient without revelation, for any other exercise of moral government and intercourse, besides those that are friendly, *viz.* in judging and condemning them. They have light sufficient for that judgment and condemnation, of which they shall be the subjects. For their condemnation shall proceed no further, than proportioned to their light. They shall be condemned for the

violation of the law of nature and nations; and the degree of their condemnation shall be only answerable to the degree of the means and advantages they have had for information of the duties of this law, and of their obligations to perform them.

Ans. 4. What has appeared in those parts of the world which have been destitute of revelation, is so far from being any evidence that revelation is not necessary, that in those nations and ages which have been most destitute of revelation, the necessity of it has most evidently and remarkably appeared, by the extreme blindness and delusion which have prevailed and reigned, without any remedy, or any ability in those nations to extricate themselves from their darkness.

§ 14. I think, a little sober reflection on those opinions which appear among the deists, weighing them together with the nature of things, may convince us, that a general renunciation of divine revelation, after nations have enjoyed it, would soon bring those nations to be more absurd, brutish, and monstrous in their notions and practices, than the heathens were before the gospel came among them. For, (1.) Those nations had many things among them derived originally from revelation, by tradition from their ancestors, the ancient founders of nations, or from the Jews, which led them to embrace many truths contained in the scripture; and they valued such tradition. It was not in general, their humour to despise such an original of doctrines, or to contemn them because they had their first foundation in divine revelation, but they valued them the more highly on this account; and had no notion of setting them aside, in order to the drawing of every thing from the foundation of their own reason. By this means, they had a great deal more of truth in matters of religion and morality, than ever human reason would have discovered without helps. But now, the humour of the deists is, to reject every thing that they have had from supposed revelation or any tradition whatsoever, and to receive nothing but what they can clearly see, and demonstrate from the fountain of their own unassisted reason. (2.) The heathens, by tradition, received and believed many great truths, of vast importance, that were incomprehensible; and it was no objection with them against receiving them, that they were above their comprehension. But now, it is a maxim with the free-thinkers, that nothing is to be believed but what can be comprehended; and this leads them to reject all the principles of natural religion (as it is called) as well as revealed. For there is nothing pertaining to any doctrine of natural religion, not any perfection of God, no, nor his very existence from eternity, without many things attending it that are incomprehensible. (3.) The heathens of old, in their reasonings, did not proceed in that exceeding haughtiness and dependence on their own mere singu-

lar understanding, disdaining all dependence on teaching, as our deists do; which tends to lead one to reject almost all important truths, out of an affectation of thinking freely, independently, and singularly. Some of the heathens professed their great need of teaching, and of *divine* teaching. (4.) The heathens did not proceed with that enmity against moral and divine truth, not having been so irritated by it. They were willing to pick up some scraps of this truth which came from revelation, which our deists reject all in the lump.

§ 15. If we suppose that God never speaks to, or converses at all with mankind, and has never, from the beginning of the world, said any thing to them, but has perfectly let them alone, as to any voluntary, immediate, and direct signification of his mind to them, in any respect teaching, commanding, promising, threatening, counselling or answering them; such a notion if established, would tend exceedingly to atheism. It would naturally tend to the supposition, that there is no Being that made and governs the world. And if it should nevertheless be supposed, that there is *some* Being who is, in some respect, the original of all other beings; yet this notion would naturally lead to doubt of his being properly an intelligent, volitive Being; and to doubt of all duties to him implying intercourse, such as prayer, praise, or any address to him, external or internal, or any respect to him at all analogous to that which we exercise towards rulers or friends, or any intelligent beings we here see and know; and so it would tend to overthrow every doctrine and duty of natural religion. Now, in this respect, deism has a tendency to a vastly greater degree of error and brutishness, with regard to matters of religion and morality, than the ancient heathenism. For the heathens in general had no such notion, that the Deity never at all conversed with mankind in the ways above-mentioned; but received many traditions, rules, and laws, as supposing they came from God, or the gods, by revelation.

§ 16. Many of the free-thinkers of late deceive themselves, through the ambiguity or equivocal use of the word *Reason*. They argue that we must make our reason the highest rule by which to judge of all things, even of the doctrines of revelation; because reason is that by which we must judge of revelation itself. It is the rule on which our judgment of the truth of a revelation depends, and therefore undoubtedly must be that, by which particular doctrines of it must be judged: not considering that the word *reason* is here used in two senses. In the former, *viz.* in our judging of the divinity of a supposed revelation, the word means the *faculty* of reason taken in the whole extent of its exercise: in the latter, it is the *opinion* of our reason, or some particular opinions that have appeared rational to us. Now, there is a great difference between these

two. It is true, the faculty of reason is that by which we are to judge of every thing, as it is the eye by which we see all truth. And after we have received revelation, still, by the faculty of reason, we receive the particular doctrines of revelation, yea, even those that are most difficult to our comprehension. For, by the faculty of reason we determine this principle, that God knows better than us; and whatever God declares is true. But this is an exceedingly different thing from making an *opinion*, which we first established without revelation, by reason only, as our rule to judge of particular doctrines which revelation declares. It may be illustrated by this: If there be a man with whom we have the most thorough acquaintance, and have long known to be a person of the soundest judgment and greatest integrity, who goes a journey or voyage to a place where we never were; and, when he returns, gives an account of some strange phœnomena or occurrences that he was an eye-witness of there, which we should not have otherwise believed; but we believe them now to be true, because we rely on his testimony. Here, it would be ridiculous for a man to say, that it is unreasonable to believe him, because what he says is not agreeable to reason, (meaning, by *reason*, that particular *opinion* we should have had, independent of his testimony;) and urging that *reason*, must be our highest rule, and not his testimony, because it is by our *reason* that we judge of the testimony, and credibility of the man that testifies; meaning, in this case, the *faculty* of reason. This would be as unreasonable, as for a man to say, that he never will rely on any representation made by the best microscope or telescope that is different from the representation which he has by the naked eye; because his eye is the rule by which he sees even the optic glass itself, and by which he judges whether it be regularly made, tending to give a true representation of objects; urging that his eye must be the highest rule for him to determine by, because it is by the eye he determines the goodness and sufficiency of the glass itself; and therefore he will credit no representation made by the glass, wherein the glass differs from his eyes; and so will not believe that the blood consists partly of red particles, and partly of a limpid liquor, because it appears all red to the naked eye; not considering the different sense in which he uses the word *eye*. In the former case, *viz.* with respect to judging of the goodness of the optic glass, he means the sense of seeing, or the organ of sight. In the latter, when he says he will not believe the representation of the glass, wherein it differs from his eye, because his *eye* is the highest rule: by the *eye*, he means the particular *representation* he has by his eye, separately, and without the glass.

§ 17. Again: They blunder exceedingly, through not making a distinction between *reason* and a *rule of reason*. They say,

that reason is our highest rule by which to judge of all things and therefore they must judge of the doctrines of revelation by it; whereas, they seem not to consider what they mean by reason being the highest rule. It is true, our reason or understanding is the only *judging faculty* by which we determine truth and falsehood. But it is not properly our highest *rule of judging* of truth and falsehood, nor any rule at all. The *judge*, and the *rule* by which he judges, are diverse. A *power* of discerning truth, and a *rule* to regulate and determine the use of that power, are quite different things. The *rule* may be divine revelation, especially in matters of religion. As it is with the faculty or organ of sight, the organ is not properly the *highest* means, but the only *immediate* means we have of discerning the objects of sight. But if men were talking of *rules* how to *use* their eyes to the best advantage, so as to see most certainly and clearly—to see the most distant or the minutest objects, so as to have the most certain and full information—it would be ridiculous for any one to say that his *eye* was the highest *rule* to regulate his sight.

§ 18. Sometimes, by the word *reason*, is intended the same as *argument* or *evidence*, which the faculty of reason makes use of in judging of truth: as when we say, we should believe nothing without, or contrary to *reason;* that is, we should not give the assent of our judgments without, or against *evidence*, or, something that appears which argues the thing to be true. But if this be meant by them who assert reason to be a rule superior to revelation, it is absurd in them thus to speak of reason as contra-distinguished from revelation. To say, that argument or evidence is a higher rule than revelation, is to make evidence and divine revelation entirely distinct; implying, that divine revelation is not of the nature of evidence or argument. They ought to explain themselves who assert, that *evidence* is superior to the evidence we have by divine revelation. It is true, divine testimony is not the same thing as argument or evidence in general; because it is a particular sort of evidence. There are other particular sorts of evidence; and persons might speak as intelligibly, if they single out any other kind of evidence, and assert, that reason or evidence was superior to that sort of evidence. As for instance, one sort of evidence is human testimony of credible eye-witnesses; another is credible history; another is memory; another is present experience; another is geometrical mensuration; another is arithmetical calculation; another is strict metaphysical distinction and comparison. Now, would it not be an improper and unintelligible way of speaking, to ask, whether *evidence* was not above *experience?* or whether *argument* was not above *mensuration* or *calculation?* If they who plead, that reason is a rule to judge of truth superior to revelation, mean by *reason, that* evidence, which is wor-

thy to influence the faculty of reason ; it seems not to be considered by them, that such evidence, when spoken of in general, *comprehends* divine testimony, as well as other sorts of evidence; unless they would entirely set aside divine revelation, as carrying in it no evidence at all. If this be their meaning, they are deceitful ; for this is not what they pretend : since it would entirely change the point in dispute, and alter the whole controversy.

Or if, when they say reason is a higher rule than revelation, they mean reason *exclusive* of revelation, or that such arguments of truth as we have without revelation, are better than divine testimony ; that is as much as to say, all other arguments are better than divine testimony. For reason or argument, without divine testimony, comprehends all other arguments that are without divine testimony : and then, this is as much as to say, that divine testimony is the very least and lowest of all possible arguments, that ever can occur to the mind of man, in any measure to influence his judgment ; which meaning they will hardly own. On the whole, it is manifest, that, let us turn the expressions which way we will, all the boasted proof of their assertion is owing wholly to confusion, and an ambiguous use of terms ; it is talking without ideas, and making sounds without fixing any distinct meaning.

§ 19. Here, if any, in disdain of such an imputation, shall say, " I see no necessity of supposing this assertion to be so unreasonable and unintelligible. By reason, we mean *that* evidence which is seen by reason simply considered ; reason itself, without dependence on the dictates of another ; viewing things as they are in themselves :" such an objector is mistaken, if he thinks he has got clear of the difficulty. All evidence whatsoever, even that by divine revelation, is included in his description of reason. It is by viewing things *as they are* in themselves, and judging by our *own* reason, and not by the reason of another, that we judge there is a divine revelation, and that we judge divine revelation must be agreeable to truth. Reason judges by viewing things as they are in themselves, not the less because it makes use of a *medium* of judgment ; and when reason makes use of divine testimony as an evidence or medium of judgment, it judges as much by viewing things as they are in themselves, as when it makes use of any other medium of judgment ; as, for instance a measuring rod in judging of distances, a compass in judging of directions and courses, and figures and characters in calculating and determining numbers.

If any should say, that *reason*, in our inquiries after truth, is to be regarded as a rule superior to *experience*, this—according to what would be most naturally suggested to the mind by such a saying, and might generally be supposed to be intended by it according to the more usual acceptation of words—would

be a foolish assertion. For by the comparison which takes place in the proposition between *reason* and *experience*, reason would be understood in such a sense as that it might properly be set in opposition to experience, or taken in contradiction to it; and therefore the proposition must be understood thus, *viz.* That our highest rule is what our reason would suggest to us independent of experience, in the same things that are matters of experience. Or, what our reason would lead us to suppose *before* experience, is what we must regard as our highest rule, even in those matters that afterward are tried *by* experience. Certainly, he that should proceed in this manner in his inquiries after truth, would not be thought wise by considerate persons.

§ 20. Yet it is really true, in some sense, that our reason is our highest rule; and that by which we are to try and judge of all things: even our experience and senses themselves must be tried by it. For we have no other faculty but our reason, by which we can determine of truth or falsehood, by any argument or medium whatsoever. Let the argument be testimony or experience, or what it will, we must judge of the goodness or strength of the argument by reason. And thus it is we actually determine, that *experience* is so good and sure a medium of proof. We consider the nature of it; and our reason soon shows us the necessary connexion of this medium with truth. So we judge of the degree of dependence that is to be had on our senses by reason; by viewing the agreement of one sense with another, and by comparing, in innumerable instances, the agreement of the testimonies of the senses with other criteria of truth, and so rationally estimating the value of these testimonies.

But if this is what is meant by saying, that our reason is a surer rule than experience, it is an improper way of speaking, and an abuse of language. For, take reason thus; and so reason and experience are not properly set in contradiction, or put in comparison one with another; for the former includes the latter, as the genus includes the species, or as a whole includes the several particular sorts comprehended in that whole. For, judging by experience is one way of judging by reason, or rather, experience is one sort of argument which reason makes use of in judging. And to say that reason is a more sure rule than experience, is to say, that arguing is a more sure rule than a particular way of arguing: or to say that argument (in general) is a more sure rule than that particular sort of argument, *viz.* experience. Or if, by reason, is meant the *faculty of reason*, or that power or ability of the mind, whereby it can see the force of arguments; then such an assertion will appear still more nonsensical. For then, it is as much as to say, that the mind's *ability* to see the force of arguments, is a surer rule by which to judge of truth, than that particular argument,

viz. experience; which is the same as to say, an ability to judge of arguments is a surer argument than that sort of argument, experience; or that a man's understanding is a better rule to understand by, than such a particular means or rule of understanding.

These observations concerning reason and experience, when these two are compared as rules by which to judge of truth, may be applied to reason and revelation, or divine testimony, when in like manner compared as distinct rules of truth. To insist, that men's own reason is a rule superior to divine revelation, under a pretence, that it is by reason that we must judge even of the authority of revelation; that all pretended revelations must be brought to the test of reason; and that reason is the judge whether they are authentic or not, &c., is as foolish as it would be to assert, for the like reasons, that man's own *reason* is a test of truth superior to *experience*. There is just the same fallacy in the arguments that are brought to support one and the other of these foolish assertions; and both are, for reasons equally forcible, very false, or very nonsensical.

§ 21. If the assertion of those who say, that men's own reason is a higher test of truth than divine revelation, has any sense in it, it must imply a comparison of *different sorts* of arguments or evidences of truth; and so the meaning of it must be, that those evidences of truth, which men find before they have the help of divine revelation, are a better criterion of truth, than any discovery they have by revelation. And their great argument to prove it, is this, that the faculty of reason, by which the mind is able to discern the force of truth, is the only faculty by which we are able to judge of the value and force of revelation itself. It is just such a sort of arguing, as if a person should go about to demonstrate, that a man could more certainly discover the form and various parts of the planets with the naked eye, than with a telescope; because the eye is that by which we see all visible things, yea by which we see and discern how to use and to judge of the goodness of telescopes themselves.

In the argument these men use, to prove that reason is a better test of truth than revelation, they wretchedly deceive themselves, by sliding off from the meaning which they give to the word *reason* in the premises, into another meaning of it exceedingly diverse in the conclusion. In the premises, wherein they assert, that reason is that by which we judge of all things, even of revelation itself, they mean either the *power* of discerning evidence; or the *act* of reasoning in general. The consequence they draw is, therefore, reason is a higher test of truth than revelation. Here if they retained the same sense of the word as in the premises, the conclusion would be perfect nonsense. For then, the conclusion would be thus: The

power or the *act* of discerning evidence, is a better *evidence* of truth, than divine revelation. But this is not what is intended to be understood. What is intended in the conclusion, is, that the evidence we have before we have revelation, or independently of it, is better and more certain than revelation itself.

§ 22. The outward provision which God makes through the ages of the world for the temporal benefit and comfort of mankind, in causing his sun to shine, and his rain to descend upon them, and in numberless other things, is a great argument that God was not determined to be their everlasting, irreconcileable enemy. And if God be reconcileable, it will follow, that he must make a revelation to mankind, to make known to them the terms and methods of reconciliation. For God, who is offended, alone can tell us, on what terms he is willing to be reconciled; and how he will be at peace with us, and receive us to favour. And there surely is nothing which can be pretended to be any revelation of this kind, if the holy scripture is not.

§ 23. *Objection.* The scriptures are communicated to but few of mankind; so that if a revelation of the method of reconciliation be necessary, a very great part of those who enjoy these external benefits and bounties of divine providence, still have no opportunity to obtain reconciliation with God, not having the benefit of that revelation. So that, notwithstanding these seeming testimonies of favour and placableness, it is all one to them, as if God was irreconcileable. For still, for want of the knowledge of the method of reconciliation, it is all one to them, as though there were no such method, and as though no reconciliation were possible.—To this, I answer,

1*st*. The case of mankind is not just the same as if there were no such thing as reconciliation for mankind, or as though reconciliation were utterly impossible. For although the circumstances of a great part of the world be such, that their reconciliation be very improbable, yet is not utterly impossible. There is a way of reconciliation, and it is publicly known in the world; and God has ever afforded opportunity to the generality of the habitable world, that if the minds of men had been as much engaged in the search of divine truth as they ought to have been, they might have felt after God, and found him; and might probably have come to an acquaintance with divine revelation.

2*d*. If there have been some parts of mankind, in some ages, for whom it was next to impossible that they should ever come to know that revelation which God has made, yet that hinders not the force of the argument for God's placableness to sinners, and the existence of a revealed method of reconciliation. The common favours of Providence may be a proof, that God intends favour to *some* among mankind, but

yet be no proof that he intends that *all* shall actually have the benefits of his favour. None will deny, but that those outward blessings of God's goodness were intended for the temporal benefit of *mankind;* and yet there are numbers who never actually receive any temporal benefit by many of them. None will doubt, but that God aimed at men's outward good, in providing grain, and grapes, and other fruits, which the earth produces for man's subsistence and comfort in the world; as also the most useful animals. But yet a very great part of the world were for a long time wholly destitute of the most useful of these. All the innumerable nations that dwelt on this American side of the globe, were from age to age, till the Europeans came hither, wholly destitute of wheat, rye, barley, pease, wines, horses, neat cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, and many other useful animals and fruits, which abounded in the other continent.

And it is probable, that some of those gifts of nature and providence, which are most useful to mankind, were what all men remained without the benefit of for many ages; as metals, wine, and many things used for food, clothing, and habitations. The loadstone, with regard to its polar direction, was doubtless intended for the use of mankind; but yet it is but lately that any of them have had any benefit of it. Glass is a great gift of providence, and yet but lately bestowed; and also some of the most useful medicines. And with regard to those things which are most universally useful, some have the benefit of them in vastly lesser degrees than others; as the heat of the sun, vegetation, &c.

§ 24. If it should be further objected, That, if God's true aim in these outward benefits of providence, which have the appearances of favour, be real favours to mankind, and so that the true happiness of mankind should be the consequence; one would think it would have the same effect in all places where those blessings are bestowed.

I answer, that it will not follow. God may grant things in all parts of the world, the main design of which may evidently be the benefit of mankind, and yet not have that effect in all places where they are given. As the main design of him who orders the existence of rain in the world, is making the earth fruitful; yet it does not follow, that he designed this should actually be the effect of all parts of the globe where the rain falls. For it falls on the sea as well as the dry land, which is more than one half the globe: but yet *there* it cannot answer this intention.

§ 25. Reason alone cannot certainly determine, that God will not insist on some satisfaction for injuries he receives. If we consider what have in fact been the general notions of mankind, we shall see cause to think, that the dictates of men's

minds, who have been without revelation, have been contrariwise, *viz.* that the Deity will insist on some satisfaction. Repentance makes some satisfaction for many injuries that men are guilty of one towards another; because it bears some proportion to the degree of injury. But reason will not certainly determine, that it is proper for God to accept of repentance as some satisfaction for an offence, when that repentance is infinitely disproportionate to the heinousness of the offence, or the degree of injuriousness that is offered. And reason will not certainly determine, that the offence of forsaking and renouncing God in heart, and treating him with such indignity and contempt, as to set him below the meanest and vilest things, is not immensely greater, and more heinous, than any injury offered to men; and that therefore all our repentance and sorrow fall infinitely short of proportion in measure and degree. If it be said, that we may reasonably conclude, and be fully satisfied in it, that a good God will forgive our sin on repentance; I ask, what can be meant by repentance in the case of them that have no love nor true gratitude to God in their hearts, but who discover such an habitual disregard and contempt of God in their conduct, as to treat created things, of the lowest value, with greater respect than him? If it be said, that thereby is meant being sorry for the offence; I ask, whether that sorrow is worthy to be accepted as true repentance, that does not arise from any change of heart, or from a better mind, a mind more disposed to love God, and honour him, being now so changed as to have less disregard and contempt? whether or not the sorrow which arises only from fear and self-love, with a heart still in rebellion against God, be such as we can be certain will be accepted? If not, how shall a man, who at present has no better heart, but yet is greatly concerned for himself through fear, know how to obtain a better heart? How does it appear, that he, if he tries only from fear and self-love, can make himself better, and make himself love God? what proper tendency can there be in the heart to make itself better, until it sincerely repents of its present badness? and how can the heart have sincerity of repentance of the present badness, until it begins to be better, and so begins to forsake its badness, by truly disapproving it, from a good disposition, or a better tendency arising in it? If the disposition remain just the same, then no sincere disapprobation arises; but the reigning disposition, instead of destroying, on the contrary, approves and confirms itself. The heart can have no tendency to make itself better, until it begins to have a better tendency; for therein consists its badness, *viz.* having no good tendency or inclination. And to begin to have a good tendency, or, which is the same thing, to begin to have a sincere inclination to be better, is the same thing as to begin already to be

better. So that it seems, that they that are now under the reigning power of an evil heart, can have no ability to help themselves, how sensible soever they may be of their misery, and concerned through fear and self-love to be delivered; but they need this from God, as part of their salvation, *viz.* that God should give them sincere repentance, as well as pardon and deliverance from the evil consequences of sin. And how shall they know, without revelation, that God will give sinners a better heart, to enable them truly to repent; or in what way they can have any hope to obtain it of him? And if men could obtain some sincere repentance of their being wholly without that love of God that they ought to have; yet how can reason determine, that God will forgive their sin, until they wholly forsake it? or until their repentance is perfect? until they relinquish all their sinful contempt, ingratitude, and regardlessness of God? or, which is the same thing, until they fully return to their duty, *i. e.* to that degree of love, honour, gratitude and devotedness to God, that is their duty? If they have robbed God, who can certainly say that God will forgive them, until they restore all that they have robbed him of, and give him the whole that he claims by the most absolute right? But where is any man that repents with such a perfect repentance? and if there be ever any instances of it in this world, who will say, that it is in every man's power to obtain it? or that there certainly are no lower terms of forgiveness? and if there are, who can tell certainly where to set the bounds, and say precisely to what degree a man must repent? How great must his sorrow be in proportion to his offences, &c.? Or, who can say, how long a man's day of probation shall last? Will reason alone certainly determine, that if a man goes on for a long time presumptuously in his contempt, rebellion, and affronts, presuming on God's goodness, depending, that though he does thus abuse his grace as long as he pleases, yet if he repents at any time, God will forgive him, and receive him to favour, forgiving all his presumptuous aggravated rebellion, ingratitude and provocation, and will receive him into the arms of his love? will reason alone fully satisfy the mind, that God stands ready to pardon and receive to favour such a sinner, after long continuance in such horrid presumption and most vile ingratitude? Or, will reason fully determine for a certainty, that God will do it, if men thus presumptuously spend their youth, the best part of their lives, in obstinate and ungrateful wickedness, depending that God will stand ready to pardon afterward: and, in short, how can reason alone be sufficient to set the bounds, and say how long God will bear with and wait upon presumptuous sinners? how many acts of such ingratitude and presumption he will be ready to forgive, and on what terms, &c.? I say, how can reason fix these limits, with

any clear evidence that shall give the mind a fixed establishment and satisfaction?

Therefore if there be any such thing as the forgiveness and salvation of sinful men; new relations of God to men, and concerns of God with men, and a new dependence of men on God, will arise, no less, probably much more important, than those which are between God as man's creator, and the author of his natural good. And as God must manifest his perfections in a new work of redemption or salvation, contrived and ordered by his infinite wisdom, and executed by his power—in a perfect consistence with his justice and holiness, and a greater manifestation of his goodness, than is made in his works as the author of nature—so these things must be the foundation of new regards to God, new duties, and a new religion, founded on those displays of his perfections in the work of salvation, and on the new relations God sustains towards men, and the new dependence of men on God, and new obligations laid on men in that work, which may be called *revealed religion*, different from that natural religion which is founded on the works of God, as the creator and the author of nature, and our concerns with God in that work; though not at all contrary to it.

The light of nature teaches that religion which is necessary to continue in the favour of the God that made us: but it cannot teach us tha religion which is necessary to our being restored to the favour of God, after we have forfeited it.

CHAPTER IX.

Mahometanism compared with Christianity—particularly with respect to their propagation.

§ 1. In what respect the propagation of Mahometanism is far from being parallel with the propagation of Christanity, will appear by these observations.— The *revolution* that was brought to pass in the world, by the propagation of Mahometanisn, was not so great as that which happened by the propagation of Christianity; yea, in this respect, was by no means worthy to be compared to it. Consider the state the world was in before Christianity was propagated; how dark, ignorant, barbarous, and wicked; how strongly these things were established by long universal immemorial custom; how fixed in men's hearts; how established by all human authority, and power, and inclination; and how vast the alteration, when Christianity was introduced and established; how vast the overthrow of that which had been built up before, and stood from age to age; how great, how strong the building; how absolute its destruction: and also, how great the building that

was erected in its room; and how different and opposite a nature from that which had stood on the same ground before.

§ 2. But as to the revolution brought to pass in the world by Mahometanism, it consisted either in the change made among the heathen—barbarous nations, which had their orignal from Arabia or Scythia—or among professing Christians. But, with respect to either of these, was the revolution comparably so great as the other. As to the change made among those *Heathen*, they long had entertained some obscure notions of the true God; and many of the great truths of what is called natural religion, they had obtained by those glimmerings of the light of the gospel which had been diffused over great part of the world; even that part of it that had not fully embraced Christianity. But Mahometanism carried them very little farther in these things, and was an occasion of but small advance of light and knowledge. As to the change made among *Christians*, there was no advance at all made in knowledge, or in any thing that was good. And as to the change made among them as to religious customs, they had so degenerated before, and were become so superstitious, that the alteration was not very perceptible.

§ 3. The difference of the two revolutions was immensely great as to *goodness*. The change made in the world by the propagation of Christianity, was a great change indeed, with regard to light and knowledge. It was a change from great darkness to glorious and marvellous light. By the preaching of the gospel in the world, the day-spring from on high visited the earth, and the sun arose after a long night of the grossest darkness. But as to the change made in Christendom by the propagation of Mahometanism, there was no increase of light by it, but, on the contrary, it was evidently a change from light to darkness. It was a propagation of ignorance, and not of knowledge. As to the change made among the Heathens, as we observed before, there was but a small degree of increased light; and all that was added, was borrowed from Christianity. Any increase of knowledge that arose, proceeded only from Mahomet and his followers, communicating what had before been communicated to them by Christian teaching. There can be no pretence of the least degree of addition in any thing, beyond what they had before received from the gospel. And as to rules and precepts, examples, promises, or incitements to virtue of any kind, no addition at all was made. What alteration there existed, was only for the worse; the examples, histories, representations, and promises of the new Mahometan religion, only tended exceedingly to debase, debauch and corrupt the minds of such as received it.

§ 4. The revolution that was occasioned by the propagation of Christianity, was an infinitely greater and more wonderful

effect, if we consider the *opposition* that was overcome in bringing it to pass. Christianity was propagated against all the opposition that could be made by man's carnal dispositions, strengthened by inveterate general custom, principles, habits, and practice, prevailing like a mighty flood. Mahometanism was propagated, not in opposition to those inclinations, but by *complying* with them, and gratifying them, in examples, precepts, and promises, as Stapferus observes, (Theol. Polem. tom, iii. p. 292.) Speaking of Mahomet's laws, he says, "The law which he published, was, above all others, accommodated not only to the *opinions* of men, but also to the *depraved* nature, manners, and innate vices of those nations among whom he propagated it; nor did it require much more than external exercises, of which, to a carnal man, are much more easy to be performed, than those spiritual exercises which the sacred pages prescribe. He allowed of revenge for injuries; of discarding wives for the slightest causes; of the addition of wives to wives, which must have served only as so many new provocatives to lust. At the same time he indulged himself in the greatest excess of promiscuous and base lasciviousness. He placed the true worship of God in such external ceremonies, as have no tendency to promote true piety. In fine, the whole of that religion which he instituted, was adapted to no other end, than the shedding of human blood."

§ 5. This religion is particularly adapted to the luxurious and *sensual* disposition. Christianity was extremely contrary, to the most established and darling notions of the world; whereas Mahomet accommodated his doctrines to all such notions as were most pleasing at that time, among the Heathen, Arabians, Jews, and the several most prevailing sects of Christians; as Stapferus observes:

"Mahomet retained many of the opinions of the ancient Arabians; he mixed his doctrine with the fables of the Jews, and retained many of the ceremonies of the other religions prevalent at that time. The religion of Mahomet favoured the prejudices of the Jews, and of the Heathens; and was suited to the desires of the flesh, and to the allurements of the world. But the religion which Christ taught, did not, in the least instance, favour the depraved affections of men, and the indulgence of the flesh; but was diametrically opposed to them; nor was it suited to the prejudices of either Jews or Gentiles; but it was plainly contrary to the preconceived opinions of men. Whence the apostles, in preaching this religion, immediately opposed both the religion of the Jews and of the Gentiles." (ibid. p. 340.) Christianity was propagated under the most violent, universal, and cruel persecution of all the powers of the world. Mahometanism was not so; it never made its way any where, in any remarkable degree, against persecution,

§ 6. The difference will appear great, if we consider the *time* when each of these were propagated. Christianity was propagated at a time when human learning and science was at its greatest height in the world. But Mahometanism was broached and propagated in ages of great darkness, after learning had exceedingly decayed, and was almost extinguished in the world.

§ 7. The difference will farther appear, if we consider the *places* from whence these religions were propagated.—Christianity was first begun in a place of great light, the greatest light with regard to religious knowledge then known, and in a very public part of the globe; whither resorted innumerable multitudes of people three times every year, from almost all parts of the then known world. And beside the vast resort of Jews and proselytes thither, it was a country that was at that time under the inspection and government of the Romans, where they had a governor, and other public officers constantly residing. It was propagated especially from Jerusalem, the chief city in that country, and one of the greatest and most public cities in the world; and, indeed, all things considered, was next to Rome itself, nay, in some respects, even far beyond Rome. And the nations among whom it was first propagated after the Jews, were—not the more ignorant and barbarous, but—the most knowing and learned in the world; as particularly the Greeks and Romans. And the cities where it was very early received, and from whence it was promulgated to other parts, were the greatest, most public and polite; such as Antioch, Ephesus, Alexandria, Corinth, Athens, and Rome: And some of these were the greatest seats of learning and philosophy on earth.—Whereas, Mahometanism was broached in a dark corner of the earth, Arabia; and the people among whom it first gained strength, who sent out armies to propagate it to the rest of the world, were an ignorant and barbarous sort of people; such as the Saracens and Turks, who originated from Scythia.

§ 8. The difference appears in the *means* and *method* of propagation. Christianity was propagated by light, instruction and knowledge, reasoning and inquiry. These things were encouraged by the gospel; and by these means the gospel prevailed, But Mahometanism was not propagated by light and instruction, but by darkness; not by encouraging reasoning and search, but by discouraging knowledge and learning; by shutting out those things, and forbidding inquiry; and so, in short, by blinding the eyes of mankind.—It was propagated by the power of the sword also; by potent sultans, absolute tyrants, and mighty armies. Christianity was propagated by the weakest of men, unarmed with any thing but meekness, humility, love, miracles, clear evidence, most virtuous, holy, and amiable examples, and

the power and favour of eminent virtue, joined with assured belief of the truth, with self-denial and suffering for truth and holiness. By such weapons as these was it propagated against the power, authority, wealth, and armour of the world: against the greatest potentates, most absolute and cruel tyrants, their most crafty counsels, and greatest strength, utmost rage and cruelty, and determined resolutions to put a stop to it. It was propagated against all the strength of the strongest empire that ever was in the world.

§ 9. One principle way wherein the propagation of Christianity is a proof of its truth, consists in its being an evidence of the *facts* that are the foundation of it. Christianity is built on certain great and wonderful visible facts; such as, Christ's resurrection from the dead, and the great and innumerable miracles wrought by him and his apostles, and other his followers, in Judea, and many parts of the world.—These facts were always referred to, as the foundation of the whole; and Christianity always pretended to be built on them. That Christianity, which, in effect, is no other than the belief of these facts, should be extensively propagated in, and near the places and time when the facts were said to be wrought; when and where there was so much opportunity and advantage to know the truth of the matter; is a great, standing everlasting evidence of the truth of the facts. But as to Mahometanism, it pretends to no facts for its proof and foundation, but only Mahomet's pretences to intercourse with heaven, and his success in rapine, murder, and violence.—Belief of sensible miracles, or public attestations of heaven to Mahomet's authority and doctrines, was no part of his religion; and was not employed in its propagation.

§ 10. If we consider the propagation of Christianity as a doctrine or belief of wonderful divine facts, Mahometanism is not set up in opposition to it: because the Mahometan religion itself acknowledges the principal facts of Christianity, though it has no facts of its own to urge. And so Mahometanism rather confirms than weakens Christianity; and the propagation of Mahometanism itself, may be considered as one thing belonging to the propagation of Christianity, and as a part of that propagation, in as far as it consists in a propagation of a *professed belief* of those facts. It is so far an instance of the propagation of that which is the foundation of Chistianity, that it proves all the rest. The Alcoran owns Jesus to be a great prophet; "the messenger of God," (Surat. v. 84.) that he wrought miracles, healing a man blind from his birth, and the leprous, (Surat. v. 119.) also raising the dead; and that Jesus as born of Mary was himself a miracle, (Surat. xxiii. 52.) He often speaks of Jesus as the servant and messenger of God; (Surat. iv. 158. iii. 152. iv. 169, 170. v. 84.) Now, owning this,

is in effect owning the whole. This is the foundation of the whole, and proves all the rest. It owns that Jesus was miraculously conceived and born; (Surat. iii. 47. xix. 20. 21.) and without sin. (Surat. iii. 36. xix. 19.)—Mahomet owns Jesus, and ascribes the conception of Christ alone to the power of God, and the inflation of his Spirit.—In Surat. xxi. 19. are these words, as the words of God; "And Mary was a chaste virgin, and We inspired her with Our Spirit, and set up her and her son as a miracle to all ages."—He owned Jesus to be the Messiah foretold in the law and the prophets; Surat. iii. 45. "When the angels said, O Mary, certainly God declares to thee his own word; his name shall be Jesus Christ, the son of Mary:" Surat. xix. 29. Surat. iv. "Certainly Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the ambassador of God and his word." He owned Christ's ascension into heaven. "God raised him (Christ) to himself;" Surat. iv. 157. Concerning Christ's miracles, Mahomet says, Surat. iii. 45. v. 119. "God says, O Jesus, the son of Mary, I have strengthened thee by the spirit of holiness; and thou shalt, by my leave, heal a man blind from his birth; and by my leave thou shalt raise the dead from their graves."

§ 11. In this respect the great propagation of the Mahometan religion is a *confirmation* of revealed religion—and so of the Christian in particular, which alone can have any pretext to be a religion revealed by God—as this is a great demonstration of the extreme darkness, blindness, weakness, childishness, folly, and madness of mankind in matters of religion, and shows how greatly they stand in need of a divine guide, and divine grace and strength for their help, such as the gospel reveals. And that this gross delusion has continued so long to so great an extent, shows how helpless mankind are, under ignorance and delusion in matters of religion; and what absolute need they have of extraordinary divine interposition for their relief. And besides, such a miserable, blind, helpless state of mankind, is also exactly agreeable to the representation made in the Christian revelation.

CHAPTER X.

The Jewish nation have, from their very beginning, been a remarkable standing evidence of the truth of revealed religion.

§ 1. When every other nation under heaven had forsaken the True God, and was overwhelmed in heathenish darkness, the Jews had among them the knowledge and worship of the True God, and rational and true notions of his being, attributes, and works: of his relation to mankind, our dependence upon him,

and the worship and regards due to him. This was upheld among them alone, for so many ages, to the coming of Christ; while they were surrounded on every side, with nations vastly differing from them, and the worst of idolaters. The whole world beside themselves had forgotten the True God and forsaken his worship, and were all the while involved in gross heathenism. They lived in the midst of the most frequented and most populous parts of the world. They did not live separated from the rest of the world as in an island or a peninsula; or yet as divided from others by vast deserts, or impassable mountains; but on the continent, in the midst of the habitable world, with populous countries adjoining to them almost on every side. Those nations, who were their next neighbours on every side, were steadfastly gross Pagans, and some of the most barbarous idolaters.

§ 2. They were not a nation that studied philosophy; they had no schools among them under the care of philosophers who instructed their pupils in human science; yet they had most apparently far better, more sublime, and purer notions of God and religion, of man's duty, and of divine things in general, than the best of the heathen philosophers. Nor do they seem to have been a people any way remarkably distinguished from other nations, by their genius and natural abilities. They were a comparatively small people, not a great empire, not a vast and potent commonwealth.

§ 3. Such changes and revolutions frequently came to pass in their nation, and such was their peculiar state from time to time, that they were exceeding liable to be corrupted and overrun with heathenish notions, and the customs of idolatrous nations, and to grow into a conformity to the rest of the world in that respect. They were above two hundred years in Egypt, which may be looked upon as the second nation, if not the first, for being the fountain of idolatry.—And they lived there under circumstances tending the most to their being corrupted with idolatry, and brought to a conformity with the Egyptians in that respect, of any that can be imagined; especially on these accounts:—They were there in the beginning and rise of their nation. There the nation had its birth. It grew from one family of about seventy persons, with the father of the whole family at the head of it, to be more than a million of people, yea probably (reckoning male and female,) about two millions. And they lived there, not separate and distinct from the Egyptians; but had continual intercourse with them. Yea, they dwelt there as inferiors, in subjection to the Egyptians; their slaves: and the Egyptians who had daily concern with them, were their masters.

§ 4. After they came into the land of Canaan, they for several ages dwelt there with the remains of the ancient heathen

inhabitants, who were so numerous and strong, as sometimes to overcome, and keep them long in subjection: which also, from time to time, their idolatrous neighbours did.—And after they had lived long in the land, ten of their tribes were carried away into final captivity, and heathen inhabitants planted in their stead: by which the religion of the remaining two tribes was the more exposed. At last, these remaining two tribes, with the Levites, and all that were left of the ten tribes who had mixed with them, were carried away into Babylon, the chief city of Chaldea, the country that above all in the world, (at least excepting Egypt,) was the fountain of idolatry: there they dwelt during the time of one generation. So that before any of them returned, the body of the people were a new generation, born and brought up in that land of darkness, amongst idolaters, their superiors and masters, and most of them the most honourable men that were then in the world; and a great part, perhaps the greater part of the nation, never returned, but continued dispersed in heathen countries till Christ's coming. As to the nation in general, those in Canaan, and those out of it, were in subjection to the three successive heathen monarchies, the Persian, Grecian, and Roman; and heathen people belonging to each of those empires, often swarmed in their country.

§ 5. The people seemed to be, from their very beginning till the Babylonish captivity, exceedingly prone to idolatry; were fond, in that respect, of the customs of those heathen neighbours, and were apt to think it honourable to be like the rest of the nations, and a disgrace to be singular. This appears, in that they actually oftentimes apostatized to idolatry, embraced the worship of the heathen gods, and neglected the worship of the true God; and continued sometimes for a long time in their conformity to their heathen neighbours. Yet they were wonderfully reclaimed from time to time; so that they were never suffered finally to apostatize, as all other nations in the world had done, nor were left in their apostacy for so long a space of time.

§ 6. All is the more remarkable, in that not only the true God and his spiritual worship are so infinitely diverse from the gods and religion of the heathens; but the external institutions and rites of worship observed among the Jews, and the law of their worship and religion, were remarkably diverse and repugnant to the religious rites of their heathen neighbours. They were exceedingly opposite to the rites of the Egyptians, among whom they lived so long, and among whom they first became a nation. So were they also to the rites of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, of the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, &c.

§ 7. The Jews may be considered as a remarkable evidence of the truth of revealed religion, in that they were preserved so long a time a distinct nation from all others, even since their father Jacob's time, till this day; being neither destroyed, nor abolished, nor lost by mixing with other nations. Jacob himself was exposed to be destroyed by his brother Esau, before he was married. His family were greatly exposed to destruction, at least as to any permanent distinction from other people, when Laban pursued after him, with a design probably to kill him, and to bring back his wives and children into Padan-Aram, and to keep them there, or, at least, by some means to carry back his family, and to prevent their ever going to Canaan. He and his family were in imminent danger of being destroyed, when Esau came out against him with four hundred men. His family were greatly exposed to danger by the inhabitants of Canaan, when provoked by his sons destroying the Shechemites. A series of wonderful and miraculous providences respecting Joseph, were the means of preserving the family, without which they would probably either have perished by the famine, or in the time of that famine have wandered away from Canaan, in such obscurity, and under such disadvantages, that they would likely have never returned any more to Canaan; and so the family would have been broken up.

§ 8. In Egypt they were greatly exposed to be destroyed, when Pharaoh set himself to effect their destruction by drowning all the males. When they had continued so long in Egypt, under such abject circumstances; it could be owing to nothing but a series of the greatest miracles, that ever they were separated from that people and land, so as to return again to dwell by themselves, to be kept a distinct nation. They were in imminent danger of being swallowed up by Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea; or of receiving such a blow, as wholly to break up the design of their proceeding to Canaan, to live there. They were exposed to suffer that which would have prevented their proceeding, when the Amalekites met them, and fought with them.

§ 9. Nothing but a course of most astonishing miracles for forty years could have prevented their perishing in the wilderness, or being obliged to go back again into Egypt, and suffering captivity, dispersion, and ruin, by the nations that dwelt around that wilderness.—They were greatly exposed to be ruined as a people, by the opposition of the Moabites, Midianites, Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan.—That ever they got the possession of Canaan, which was then held by many nations greater and stronger than they, was owing to a course of great miracles, without the intervention of which they must have perished as a people.

§ 10. After they had obtained the possession of the land, they were often greatly exposed to be utterly ruined in the time of the judges, when their enemies in those parts, who seemed to have an exceeding great hatred of them, prevailed against, and had the mastery of them. It could be owing to nothing but the special providence of God, that those enemies did not improve the advantages they had in their hands, utterly to destroy them, or at least to drive, or carry them captive, out of that land; particularly the provoked Canaanites, before the deliverance by Deborah and Barak; the Midianites, and the people of the East, before the deliverance by Gideon; and after them the Philistines.

§ 11. Afterward, in the time of the kings, there were many efforts of the enemies of Israel, utterly to destroy the whole nation, to cut them off from being a people, and to blot out their very name from under heaven, agreeably to Psalm lxxxiii. 3—8. "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent. They are confederate against thee. The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur, also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot."—In David's time there was such a mighty combination of enemies against them, and so great a force was raised, that, one would think, might have been sufficient to swallow up the nation.—After Solomon's time, the nation was greatly weakened, and so much the more exposed to ruin, by their division into two kingdoms, often contending, and seldom in amity, the one with the other.—The nation was greatly exposed in Rehoboam's time to be swallowed up by Shishak king of Egypt; in Asa's time, by the vast army of the Ethiopians: and again, by the mighty army of the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, in Jehoshaphat's time, 2 Chron. xx. When the kings of Assyria overran and utterly destroyed the ten tribes, it was a wonder that the two tribes were spared, and the people were greatly exposed to be finally ruined by Sennacherib's army, who intended nothing else.

§ 12. When the people were carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole land laid utterly waste; it was a wonder, that this did not prove an entire end to them as a people. It was a wonder they were kept distinct in their captivity; that then they were delivered; and that after they had been in captivity so long, till those that had formerly lived in Canaan were generally dead, and a new generation born in Chaldea was risen up, they should be brought back, and again

settled in their own land, and established as a people there. It was a wonder that the land was vacant for them; and a wonder that they were not hindered in their design of re-settling there, by the mighty opposition made to it by the Samaritans.

§ 13. The people were marvellously preserved from being blotted out from under heaven by Haman, in the time of Esther and Mordecai. They were wonderfully preserved in Antiochus's time, who was earnestly set on their utter destruction as a people; and it may be observed in general concerning them, during the time of the Old Testament, that there was no nation whatsoever against whom the nations in general were at such enmity, as the nation of the Jews; and they were, on this account, much more likely to be destroyed than any other nation.

§ 14. They lived in a part of the world, where they were more exposed to be overrun by other nations, and so to be by them either trodden down, or torn away and scattered abroad in the earth, than had they dwelt in any other part; living as it were, in the midst of the earth, betwixt three great continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Their land lay in the very road or thoroughfare between Asia and Africa; between Egypt and the great Eastern and Northern kingdoms, which for many ages were the greatest, most potent, and active kingdoms in the world. It seems the other nations thereabout were all destroyed from being a people, before Christ's time: as the Midianites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, the seven nations of Canaan, and the Philistines.

§ 15. It is remarkable, concerning a great part of the time of the Old Testament, *viz.* from the Babylonish captivity till Christ, that a great part of the Jews lived dispersed amongst other nations: and both those who were thus dispersed, and those that lived in their own land, were all that time in the power of the heathen nations of the four monarchies.

§ 16. With respect to the time since Christ, their preservation as a distinct nation, has, in many respects, been still more remarkable. It was wonderful, that what happened to them in the time of Titus Vespasian, when the greater part of the nation was destroyed, and the rest dispersed all over the world in such wretched circumstances, did not prove their utter destruction as a people. And the calamities that had happened to the remnant soon afterward, made their continuance as a distinct people yet more surprising. For within half a century after their destruction by Titus, in the reign of Trajan and Adrian, the nation in general every where rose in rebellion against the Romans; and were finally every where beaten; so that in these wars the Jews had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, with the slaughter of about five hundred and eighty thousand

men. What are left of this people have ever since remained in a total dispersion over all the world, mixed every where with other people, without any thing like a government or civil community of their own, and often extremely harassed by other nations; though still they remain a clear and perfectly distinct nation from all other people.

PART II.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE MYSTERIES OF SCRIPTURE.

SECTION I.

WHEN we seek for any thing in the dark by so low a faculty of discerning as the sense of feeling, or by the sense of seeing with a dim light, sometimes we cannot find it: though it be there, it seems to us to be impossible that it should be. But yet, when a clear light comes to shine into the place, and we discern by a better faculty, or the same faculty in a clearer manner, the thing appears very plain to us. So, doubtless, many truths will hereafter appear plain, when we come to look on them by the bright light of heaven, that now are involved in mystery and darkness.

§ 2. How are we ready to trust to the determinations of one universally reputed a man of great genius, of vast penetration and insight into things, if he be positive in any thing that appears to us very mysterious, and is quite contrary to what we thought ourselves clear and certain in before? How are we ready in such a case to suspect ourselves, especially if it be a matter wherein he has been very much versed; has had much more occasion to look into it than we; and has been under greater advantages to know the truth? How much more still, if one should be positive in it, as a thing he had clearly and undoubtedly seen to be true, if he were still of ten times greater genius, and of a more penetrating insight into things, than any that ever have appeared? And, in matters of fact, if some person whom we had long known one of great judgment and discretion, justice, integrity, and fidelity, and had always been universally so reputed by others, should declare to us, that he had seen and known that to be true which appeared to us very strange and mysterious, and concerning which we could not see how it was possible; how, in such a case, should we be ready almost to suspect our own faculties, and to give credit to such a testimony, in that which, if he had not positively asserted it, and persisted in it, we should have looked upon as perfectly incredible, and absurd to be supposed?

§ 3. From that text, John iii. 12. "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"—several things are manifest concerning mysteries in religion. (1.) That there are things contained in those doctrines which Christ came into the world to teach, which are not only so far above human comprehension, that men cannot easily apprehend all that is to be understood concerning them; but which are difficult to be received by the judgment or belief; "How shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" difficult, upon the same account that the doctrine of the new birth was difficult to Nicodemus, because it was so strange and seemingly impossible. (2.) We may from the words infer, that the more persons are, in themselves, and in their own nature, above us; the more the doctrines or truths concerning them are mysterious to us, above our comprehension, and difficult to our belief; the more do those things that are really true concerning them, contain seeming inconsistencies and impossibilities. For Christ, in the preceding verses, had been speaking of something that is true concerning man, being of the same nature, an inhabitant of the same world with ourselves; which, therefore, Christ calls an earthly thing. And this seemed very mysterious and impossible, and to contain great seeming inconsistencies. "How can a man be born when he is old?" This seemed to be a contradiction. And after Christ had somewhat explained himself, still the doctrine seemed strange and impossible; ver. 9. "How can these things be?" Nicodemus still looked upon it as incredible, and, on that account, did not believe it at that time, as is implied in these words of Christ; "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not." But Christ here plainly signifies that he had other truths to teach that were not about man, an earthly inhabitant, but about the person vastly above men, even about himself who is from heaven and in heaven, as in the next verse: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven." Which, therefore, would be much more difficult to men's understanding and judgment, seeming to contain greater impossibilities and inconsistencies; as he then proceeds immedately to declare to him an heavenly thing, as he calls it, *viz.* that Christ, an heavenly and divine person, should die; ver. 14, 15. Such a mysterious doctrine, so strange, and seemingly inconsistent and impossible, that a divine person should die, is more strange than that men should be born again. Hence, when divines argue, from the mysterious nature of many things here below with which we are daily conversant, that it would be very unreasonable to suppose but that there should be things concerning God which are much more mysterious; and that, therefore, it is unreasonable to object against the truth of the doctrines of the Trinity, In-

carnation, &c.; they argue justly, because they argue as Christ argued.

§ 4. The wiser heathens were sensible, that the things of the gods are so high above us, that what appertains to them should appear exceedingly mysterious and wonderful to us; and that it is therefore unreasonable to disbelieve what we are taught concerning them on that account. This is fully expressed by Pythagoras; viz. "*Concerning the gods, disbelieve nothing wonderful, nor yet concerning divine things.* This, says Jamblicus, declareth the superlative excellency of God instructing us, and puts us in mind, that we ought not to estimate the divine power by our own judgment. The Pythagoreans stretched this rule beyond the line of divine revelation, to the belief of every oriental tradition." Gale's Court of the Gentiles, p. 2. b. 2. c. 8. 190.

§ 5. It is not necessary that persons should have clear ideas of the subject of a proposition, in order to be rationally convinced of the truth of the proposition. There are many truths, of which mathematicians are convinced by strict demonstration, concerning many kinds of quantities, as, surd quantities and fluxions; but concerning which they have no clear ideas.

§ 6. Supposing that mankind in general were a species of far less capacity than they are; so much less, that, when men are come to full ripeness of judgment and capacity, they arrived no higher than that degree to which children generally arrive at seven years of age; and supposing a revelation to be made to mankind, in such a state and degree of capacity, of many such propositions in philosophy as are now looked upon as undoubted truths; and let us suppose, at the same time, the same degree of pride and self-confidence as there is now; what cavilling and objecting would there be! Or supposing a revelation of these philosophical truths had been made to mankind, with their present degree of natural capacity, in some ancient generation—suppose that which was in Joshua's time—in that degree of acquired knowledge and learning which the world had arrived at then, *how incredible* would those truths have seemed!

§ 7. If things which fact and experience make certain, such as the miseries infants are sometimes the subjects of in this world, had been exhibited only in a revelation of things in an unseen state, they would be as much disputed as the Trinity and other mysteries revealed in the Bible.

§ 8. There is nothing impossible or absurd in the doctrine of the *Incarnation of Christ.* If God can join a body and a rational soul together, which are of natures so heterogeneous and opposite, that they cannot of themselves, act one upon another; may he not be able to join two spirits together, which are of natures more similar? And if so, he may, for ought we know to the contrary, join the soul or spirit of a man to him-

self. Had reason been so clear in it, that God cannot be incarnate, as many pretend, it could never have suffered such a notion to gain ground, and possess the minds of so many nations: nay, and of Julian himself, who says, that "Jupiter begat Esculapius out of his own proper substance, and sent him down to Epidaurus, to heal the distempers of mankind." Reason did not hinder Spinosa, Blount, and many other modern philosophers, from asserting, that God may have a body: or rather, that the universe, or the matter of the unvierse, is God. Many nations believed the incarnation of Jupiter himself. Reason, instead of being utterly averse to the notion of a divine incarnation, hath easily enough admitted that notion, and suffered it to pass, almost without contradiction, among the most philosophical nations of the world.

§ 9. "In thinking of God's raising so many myriads of spirits, and such prodigious masses of matter out of nothing, we are lost and astonished, as much as in the contemplation of the Trinity. We can follow God but one or two steps in his lowest and plainest works, till all becomes mystery and matter of amazement to us. How, then, shall we comprehend himself? How shall we understand his nature, or account for his actions? In that he contains what is infinitely more inconceivable than all the wonders of his creation put together." Deism Revealed, edit. 2 vol. ii. p. 93, 94.

Those who deny the *Trinity*, because of its mysteriousness and seeming inconsistence, yet, generally own God's certain prescience of men's free actions, which they suppose to be free in such a sense, as not to be necessary. So that we may do, or may not do, that which God certainly foresees. "They also hold, that such a freedom without necessity, is necessary to morality; and that virtue and goodness consists in any one's doing good when he might do evil. And yet they suppose, that God acts by the eternal law of nature and reason, and that it is impossible that he should transgress that law, and do evil; because that would be a contradiction to his own nature, which is infinitely and unchangeably virtuous. Now this seems a flat contradiction. To say, that the infinite goodness of God's nature makes it utterly impossible for God to do evil, is exactly the same as to say, he is under a natural necessity not to do evil. And to say, he is morally free, is to say he may do evil. Therefore the necessity and freedom in this case being both moral, the contradiction is flat and plain; and amounts to this, that God, in respect to good and evil actions, is both a necessary and free agent. Dr. Clark, in his Treaties on the attributes, labours to get clear of this contradiction upon these principles of liberty, but without success; and leaves it just where all men, who hold the same principles, must be forced to leave it. Therefore, they hold such mysteries, in respect to Deity, that

are even harder to be conceived of, or properly expressed, and explained, than the doctrine of the Trinity.

"When we talk of God, who is infinite and incomprehensible, it is natural to run into notions and terms which it is impossible for us to reconcile. And in lower matters, that are more within our knowledge and comprehension, we shall not be able to keep ourselves clear of them. To say that a curve line, setting out from a point within an hair's breadth of a right line, shall run towards that right line as swift as thought, and yet never be able to touch it, seems contrary to common sense; and, were it not clearly demonstrated in the conchoides of Nicomedes, could never be believed. Matter is infinitely divisible; and therefore a cubical inch of gold may be divided into an infinity of parts; and there can be no number greater than that which contains an infinity. Yet another cubical inch of gold may be infinitely divided also; and therefore, the parts of both cubes must be more numerous than the parts of one only. Here is a palpable contrariety of ideas, and a flat contradiction of terms. We are confounded and lost in the consideration of infinites; and surely, most of all, in the consideration of that *infinite of infinites*. We justly admire that saying of the philosopher, that *God is a Being whose centre is every where, and circumference nowhere*, as one of the noblest and most exalted flights of human understanding; and yet, not only the terms are absurd, and contradictory, but yet the very ideas that constitute it, when considered attentively, are repugnant to one another. Space and duration are mysterious abysses, in which our thoughts are confounded with demonstrable proposition, to all sense and reason flatly contradictory to one another. Any two points of time, though never so distant, are exactly in the middle of eternity. The remotest points of space that can be imagined or supposed, are each of them precisely in the centre of infinite space." Deism Revealed, vol. ii. p. 109, 110, 111.

Here might have been added the mysteries of God's eternal duration, it being without succession, present, before and after, all at once: *Vitæ interminabilis tota simul et perfecta possessio.*

§ 10. To reject every thing but what we can first see to be agreeable to our reason, tends, by degrees, to bring every thing relating not only to revealed religion, but even to natural religion, into doubt; to make all its doctrines appear with dim evidence, like a shadow, or the ideas of a dream, till they are all neglected as worthy of no regard. It tends to make men doubt of the several attributes of God, and so, in every respect, to doubt what kind of being God is; and to make men doubt about the forgiveness of sin, and about the duties of religion, prayer, and giving thanks, social worship, &c. It will tend, at last, to make men esteem the science of religion as of no value.

and so totally neglect it; and, from step to step, it will lead to scepticism, atheism, and, at length, to barbarity.

§ 11. Concerning common *sense*, it is to be observed, that common *inclination*, or the common dictates of inclination, are often called common sense. When any thing is shocking to the common dispositions, or inclinations of men, that is called a contradicting of common sense. So, the doctrine of the extreme and everlasting torments of hell, being contrary to men's common folly and stupidity, is often called contrary to common sense. Men, through stupidity, are insensible of the great evil of sin; and so the punishment of sin threatened in the word of God, disagrees with this insensibility, and it is said to be contradictory to common sense. In this case, that turn of mind which arises from a *wicked* disposition, goes for common sense.

"We ought never to deny, because we cannot conceive. If this were not so, then a man, born blind, would reason right, when he forms this syllogism—'We know the figure of bodies only by handling them; but it is impossible to handle them at a great distance; therefore, it is impossible to know the figure of far-distant bodies.' To undeceive the blind man, we may prove to him that this is so, from the concurrent testimony of all who surround him. But we can never make him perceive how this is so. It is, therefore, a fundamental maxim in all true philosophy, that many things may be incomprehensible, and yet demonstrable; that though seeing clearly be a sufficient reason for affirming, yet, not seeing at all, can never be a reason for denying." Ramsay's Philosophical Principles of Religion, vol. i. p. 22, 23.

§ 12. One method used to explode every thing in religion that is in the least difficult to the understanding, is to ridicule all distinctions in religion. The unreasonableness of this may appear from what Mr. Locke observes concerning discerning and judgment. Hum. Underst. book ii. chap. 2. "Accurately discriminating ideas one from another, is of that consequence to the other knowledge of the mind, that, so far as this faculty is, in itself, dull, or not rightly made use of, for distinguishing one thing from another, so far our notions are confused, and our reason and judgment disturbed or misled. If, in having ideas in the memory ready at hand, consists quickness of parts; in this, of having them unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one thing from another, where there is but the least difference, consists, in a great measure, the exactness of judgment, and clearness of reason, which is to be observed in one man above another. Judgment lies in separating carefully one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity, to take one thing for another."

So Dr. Turnbull, in his Principles of Moral Philosophy, part i. chap. 3. p. 94. "Judgment is rightly said to lie in nicely distinguishing the disagreements and variances, or differences of ideas; those, especially, which lie more remote from common observation, and are not generally adverted to. The man of judgment, or discretion, (for so discretion properly signifies,) may be defined to be one who has a particular aptitude to descry differences of all kinds between objects, even the most hidden and remote from vulgar eyes."

§ 13. If any respect to the Divine Being is of importance, then speculative points are of importance; for the only way whereby we know what he is, is by speculation.—If our doctrines concerning him, are not right, it will not be that Being, but some other, that we have respect for. So it may be said concerning our respect for Christ. If our doctrines concerning him, concerning his divinity, for instance, are false, we have not respect for the Christ of whom the Scriptures speak, but for an imaginary person, infinitely diverse. When it is said by some, that the only fundamental article of faith is, that Jesus is the Messiah; if thereby be meant, that a person, called by that name, or that lived at such a time, or place, was the Messiah, that name not implying any properties or qualities of his person, the doctrine is exceedingly unreasonable; for surely the *name* and the *place* are not of so great importance as some other things essential in his person, and have not so great concern in the identity of the object of our ideas and respect, as the person the gospel reveals. It is one great reason why speculative points are thought to be of so little importance, that the modern religion consists so little in respect to the Divine Being, and almost wholly in benevolence to men.

§ 14. Concerning what is often said by some, that all things necessary to salvation are plain and clear, let us consider how, and in what sense, this is true, and in what sense it is not true. 1*st.* It is true, that all things necessary to salvation are clearly and plainly revealed. But it does not follow, that they shall *appear* to be plainly revealed to *all men*. No divine thing can have evidence sufficient to appear evident to *all men*, however great their prejudices, and however perverse their dispositions. 2*dly.* If thereby is meant, that all things necessary to be believed, are easily comprehended, there is no reason in such an assertion, nor is it true.

Some late writers insist, that, for a thing to be revealed, and yet remain mysterious, is a contradiction; that it is as much as to say, a thing is revealed and yet hid. I answer, the thing revealed, is the truth of the doctrine; so that the *truth* of it no longer remains hid, though many things concerning the *manner* may be so. Yet many things concerning the nature of the things revealed may be clear, though many other things con-

cerning their nature may remain hid. God requires us to understand no more than is intelligibly revealed. That which is not distinctly revealed, we are not required distinctly to understand. It may be necessary for us to know a thing in part, and yet not necessary to know it perfectly.

§ 15. The importance of all Christian doctrines whatsoever, will naturally be denied, in consequence of denying that one great doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction to Divine justice, and maintaining those doctrines that establish men's own righteousness, as that on which, and for which, they are accepted of God. For that great Christian doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, his vicarious sufferings and righteousness, by which he offered an infinite price to God for our pardon and acceptance, to eternal favour and happiness, is that to which all evangelical doctrines, all doctrines beside the truths of natural religion, have relation; and they are of little importance, comparatively, any other way, than as they have respect to that. This is, as it were, the centre and hinge of all doctrines of pure revelation.

§ 16. Indeed, the Papists, who are very far from having such a notion of that evangelical faith, which is the special condition of salvation in opposition to works, and have forsaken the evangelical notion of true saving religion, yet with fiery zeal, insist on the profession of a great number of doctrines, and several of the doctrines of pure revelation, as the Trinity, &c. But this in them flows not from any regard to their influence in internal saving religion, but from quite another view, *i. e.* to uphold their tyranny. These are the doctrines which have been handed down among them by their church from ancient tradition; and, to maintain the credit of the infallibility and divine authority and dominion of their hierarchy over men's faith, they must be zealous against any that presume to deny Christ's doctrines, because they look upon it as an infringement on the high authority they claim. And some Protestants have a zeal for doctrines from like views; doctrines, indeed, for which they have no great value, in themselves considered.

§ 17. That it is not alone sufficient to believe this one article, that a person of the name of *Jesus* came from God to reveal his will to man, without knowing or determining what he was, or concerning his nature and qualities, is evident from this, that it is often spoken of as necessary to *know* Christ. It is said, "This is eternal life, to *know* thee, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

§ 18. There are two things especially that make modern fashionable divines look on doctrines of revealed religion of little importance. One is, their mistake about the *conditions* of salvation; another is, their mistake about the *nature* of

true virtue, placing it chiefly, and most essentially, in benevolence to men, and so little in respect to God and Christ. If Christian virtue consists very much in a proper respect to Christ, then, certainly, it is of great importance to know what sort of person he is, at least as to that particular wherein his excellency, or worthiness of regard, consists, which is surely his divinity, if he be a divine person. Another thing on which a proper respect to him depends, is his relation to us, and our dependence upon him; which, surely, chiefly depends on his satisfaction and merits for us, if he has satisfied and merited for us. The reasons, or grounds, of the love and honour to Christ, required of us, consist chiefly in two things: (1.) In what he *is;* and, (2.) In what he has *done* for us. Therefore, with regard to the latter, it concerns us greatly to know, at least as to the principal things, what they are. And, if he has satisfied for our sins; if he has suffered in our stead; if he has truly purchased eternal life and happiness for us; if he has redeemed us from an extremely sinful, miserable, helpless state; a state wherein we deserved no mercy, but eternal misery, then these are principal things.

Another reason why doctrines are thought to be of little importance, is a notion of *sincerity* wherein true virtue consists, as what may be prior to any means of it that God grants; as if it was what every man had in his power, antecedently to all means; and so the means are looked upon as of little importance. But the absurdity of this may be easily manifested. If it be independent of all means, then it may be independent of natural information, or of the truths of the light of nature, as well as of revealed religion; and men may *sincerely* regard and honour they know not what. The truths of natural religion, wherein Christians differ from the most ignorant, brutish, and deluded idolaters, the most savage and cruel of the heathen nations, may be of little importance. And the reason why they have this notion of sincerity antecedent to means, and so independent of means, is, that they have a notion that sincerity is independent of God, any otherwise than as they depend on him for their creation. They conceive it to be independent of his sovereign will and pleasure. If they were sensible that they depend on God to give it according to his pleasure, it would be easy and natural to acknowledge, that God gives it in his own way, and by his own means.

§ 19. If any article of faith at all concerning Jesus Christ be of importance, it must be of importance to know or believe something concerning his person; what sort of a person or being he was. And if any thing concerning him be of importance to be known and believed, it must be something wherein his excellency or worthiness of regard consists: For nothing can be of importance to be known or believed about him, but

in order to some regard or respect of heart. But most certainly, if any thing of his excellency and dignity be of importance to be known or believed, it must be of importance at least to know so much about him, as to know whether he be God or a mere creature; for herein lies the greatest difference, as to dignity, that possibly can be. This difference is infinite. If it be of importance to know how worthy he is, then it doubtless is of importance that we should not be ignorant of, and deny as it were, all his dignity, or so much of it, that what remains shall be absolutely as nothing to that which is denied. It is of importance that we love Christ, or have respect to him as one that is excellent, and worthy of esteem and love. The apostle says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." And doubtless, true love to Christ is in some respect suitable to the worthiness and excellency of his person. Therefore it is of importance to believe, and not to deny those doctrines which exhibit his worthiness. It is of importance that we do not in effect deny the whole of his worthiness.

§ 20. How many things were believed by the ancient philosophers about divine matters, even the most rational of them, more mysterious than the doctrine of the Trinity, chiefly because such things were handed to them by the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, or Persians, or on the authority of some great master? Yet these things were imbibed without much difficulty, the incomprehensibleness of the doctrines being no objection to their receiving them.

§ 21. There are things evidently true concerning the nature of our own souls, that seem strange paradoxes, and are seeming contradictions; as, that our souls are in no place, and yet have a being; or, if they are supposed to be in a place, that yet they are not confined to place, and limited to certain space; or, if they be, that they are not of a certain figure; or, if they are figurate, that their properties, faculties, and acts, should or should not be so too.

§ 22. If many things we all see and know of the mortality of mankind, the extreme sufferings of infants, and other things innumerable in the state of the world of mankind, were only matter of doctrine which we had no notice of any other way than by revelation, and not by fact and experience; have we not reason to think, from what we see of the temper of this age, that they would be exceedingly quarrelled with, objected mightily against, as inconsistent with God's moral perfections, not tending to amiable ideas of the Godhead, &c.?

§ 23. The definition of a *mystery*, according to Stapferus, Theol. Polem. p. 263 and 858, is this: A *mystery* is a religious doctrine, which must be made known by immediate revelation, and cannot be known and demonstrated from the principles of

reason, but is above reason, and which in this whole universe has nothing like itself, but differs from all those truths which we discover in this system of the world. (Ibid, p. 859.) It appears from this definition, that whatever is known by divine revelation, and is not certain from the principles of reason, is a *mystery*; otherwise it could not be said to be revealed. Mysteries are the first things which we conceive concerning revelation; for no revelation can be conceived without mysteries, and therefore they constitute the sum and essence of revelation.

§ 24. It is to be observed, that we ought to distinguish between those things which were written in the sacred books by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and those which were only committed to writing by the direction of the Holy Spirit. To the former class belong all the mysteries of salvation, or all those things which respect the means of our deliverance taught in the gospel, which could not be known from the principles of reason, and, therefore, must be revealed. But to the other class those things belong, which either are already known from natural religion, but are of service to inculcate duty on man, and to demonstrate the necessity of revealed means of salvation; or, are histories, useful to illustrate and to assure us of the doctrines revealed, and which point out the various degrees of revelation, the different dispensations of salvation, and the various modes of governing the church of God; all which are necessary to be known in the further explanation of mysteries.

§ 25. Mysteries constitute the criterion of divine revelation; so absurdly do they act, who allow a revelation, and deny mysteries; or deny revelation for this reason, that it contains mysteries. What the sum and essence of revealed religion are, is plain from the end of it, which is to point out to sinful man the means of obtaining salvation, and of recovering the divine favour. But this is, that Jesus Christ is the only and most perfect cause of salvation, to be received by a true faith. This doctrine, however, is a mystery of godliness manifestly great; 1 Tim. iii. 16. And thus that great mystery constitutes the sum and essence of revelation. The essence of revealed religion consists in this, that men by a true faith receive this doctrine, which the apostle calls a mystery manifestly great. Therefore, the knowledge of the greatest mystery belongs to the very essence of the religion of a sinner. How absurd do many of the doctrines of mathematicians and astronomers appear to ignorant men, when they cannot see the reason of those doctrines, although they are most true and evident, so that not the least doubt concerning them can remain in the mind of a thorough mathematician? (Ibid, tom. iii. p. 560.)

§ 26. Since, in religion, there are some primary truths, and others more remote, which are deduced from the former by

reasoning, and so are secondary—and these last may not be known, though the primary are known; but when once they are known, they cannot be denied—it follows, that those articles, which constitute religion, and so are fundamental, are to be distinguished into primary and secondary. The primary are those of which a man cannot be ignorant, consistently with true religion, and his own salvation; and they are necessary with a necessity of means. The secondary are those of which a man may be ignorant, consistently with his resting upon the foundation of true religion, and with his own salvation; and those are necessary with a necessity of command. Therefore, to the same man, certain doctrines may be now fundamental, which were not fundamental to him before he knew them. (Ibid, tom. i. p. 524, 525.)

Joh. Chr. Kirchmejerus, in his Dissert. concerning fundamental articles, says, "They may be either reduced to fewer, or extended to more; as often one article may include the rest, and so all may be reduced to that one; and, on the other hand, that one, according to the various truths contained in it, may be divided into several. Therefore, authors do not contradict themselves, who reduce all fundamental articles to one: for they cannot well be determined by their number; because, as many fundamental truths are contained in one fundamental truth, as there are essential properties belonging to the truths thus contained. Therefore, the holy scripture often sums up all fundamental articles in one, as in John xvii. 3. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' Sometimes, it distinguishes them into several; as in 1 Tim. i. 5. 'Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.'" (Ibid, tom. i. p. 528.)

§ 27. On account of the various degrees of men's capacities, and the various circumstances of the times in which they live, one man may know truths which another cannot know. Whence it follows, that the very same articles are not fundamental to all men; but accordingly as revelation hath been more or less complete, according to the several dispensations under which men have lived, their various natural abilities, and their various modes and circumstances of living, different articles are, and have been, fundamental to different men. This is very plain from the different degrees of knowledge before and since the coming of Christ; for, before his coming, many truths lay hid, which are now set in the most clear light: and the instance of the apostles, abundantly shows the truth of what I have now advanced; who, although they were already in a state of grace, and their salvation was secured, yet for some time were ignorant of the necessity of the sufferings and

death of Christ, and of the true nature of his kingdom. Whereas, he who now does not acknowledge the necessity of Christ's death, is, by all means, to be considered as in fundamental error. Therefore, as a man hath received of God greater or less natural abilities, so let the number of articles to which he shall give his assent, be greater or smaller; and, as revelation hath been made, or information hath been given, to a man, more clearly, or obscurely, in the same proportion is more or less required of him. Therefore, in our own case, we ought to be cautious of even the smallest errors, and to aim at the highest degree of knowledge in divine truths. In the case of others, we ought to judge concerning them with the greatest prudence, mildness, and benevolence. Hence we see, that a certain precise number of articles, which shall be necessary and fundamental to every man, cannot be determined. (Ibid, p. 531.)

PART III.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

SECTION I.

If the temptation to the children of Israel was so great, to idolize the brazen serpent, a lifeless piece of brass, for the temporal salvation which some of their forefathers had by looking on it; how great would be their temptation to idolatry by worshipping Christ, if he were a mere creature, from whom mankind receive so great benefits? If that brazen serpent must be broken to pieces, to remove the temptation to idolatry, (2 Kings xviii. 4,) shall so great a temptation be laid before the world to idolize a mere creature, by setting him forth in a manner that he is set forth in scripture?

§ 2. Must Moses's body be concealed, lest the children of Israel should worship the remains of him whom God made the instrument of such great things? And shall another mere creature—whom men, on account of the works he has done, are under infinitely greater temptation to worship—be most openly and publicly exhibited, as exalted to heaven, seated at God's own right hand, made head over all things, ruler of the universe, &c. in the manner that Christ is? Was not this the temptation to all nations to idolatry, *viz.* That men had been distinguished as great conquerors, deliverers, and the instruments of great benefit? And shall God make a mere creature the instrument of so many greater benefits, and in such a manner as Christ is represented to be in the scripture, without an infinitely greater temptation to idolatry?

§ 3. When the rich young man called Christ *good Master*, not supposing him to be God, did Christ reject it, and reprove him for calling him so? He said, "There is none *good* but One, that is God;" meaning, that none other was possessed of

goodness that was to be trusted. And yet, shall this same Jesus, if indeed not that God who only is to be called *good*, or trusted in as such, be called in scripture, He that is Holy; He that is true? the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness? the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? the blessed, and the only Potentate; the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? the Lord of Life, that has life in himself, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father? the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God? the Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the End? God, Jehovah; Elohim, the King of Glory? Compare Isa. xlii. 8. Ps. lxxvii. 18. Isa. xlv. 20, 21, &c. "They pray unto a God that cannot save—Tell ye and bring them near; let them take counsel together; there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me." Yet it is said of Christ, that "He is able to save unto the uttermost." Yea, the Messiah, in this very book, is spoken of as mighty to save; saving by his own arm, and by the greatness of his strength; Isa. lxiii. 1—6, compared with Rev. xiv. 15. And it is evident, that it is his character, in the most eminent manner, to be the Saviour of God's people; and that with respect to what is infinitely the highest and greatest work of salvation; the greatest deliverance from the most dreadful evil; from the greatest, worst, and strongest enemies, and bringing them to the greatest happiness. It follows, Isaiah xlv. 22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Here, it is spoken of as the great glory of God, and peculiar to him, that he is an universal Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of all nations. And this is the peculiar character of Jesus. He is the Saviour of all nations. The glory of calling and saving the Gentiles, is represented as peculiarly belonging to him; so that he has this divine prerogative, which is spoken of here as belonging to the One only God, and to none else. And, which is more than all this, these very things are applied to Christ in the New Testament, Philip. ii. 10, 11. "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things in earth, and things under the earth." And the things spoken of in the following verses, as the peculiar prerogative of God, in distinction from all other beings, as the only Saviour, *viz.* having righteousness, and being justified in him, are every where in the New Testament most eminently ascribed to Christ, as in a most special manner belonging to him.

§ 4. Being the *Saviour* of God's people, is every where in the Old Testament mentioned as the peculiar work of the Deity. The Heathens are reproached for worshipping gods that could not save; and God says to the idolatrous Israelites, "Go to the gods whom ye have served, let them deliver you."

See Isaiah xliii. 3, 10—15, in which verses, we have another clear demonstration of the divinity of Christ.* Trusting is abundantly represented as a principal thing in that peculiar respect due to God alone, as of the essence of divine adoration due to no other than God. And yet, how is Christ represented as the peculiar object of the faith and trust of all God's people, of all nations, as having all-sufficiency for them? Trusting in any other, is greatly condemned; is a thing, than which nothing is represented as more dangerous, provoking to God, and bringing his curse on man.

§ 5. And how often is being the *Redeemer* of God's people spoken of as the peculiar character of the mighty God of Jacob, the First and Last, the Lord of Hosts, the only God, the Holy One of Israel? (So Isa. xli. 14. xliii. 14. xliv. 6, 24. xlvii. 4. xlviii. 17. xlix. 7, 26. liv. 5; and lx. 16.) And it may be observed, that when God has this title of the *Redeemer of Israel* ascribed to him in those places, it is joined with some other of the peculiar and most exalted names and titles of the most high God: such as the Holy One of Israel; (so Isa. xli. 14. xliii. 14. xlvii. 4. xlviii. 17. xliv. 6. and xlix. 7.) The Mighty one of Jacob, (chap. xlix. 26. and lx. 16.) The Lord of Hosts, (Isa. xlvii. 4. and xliv. 6.) The God of the whole earth, (chap. liv. 5.) The First and the Last, besides whom there is no God, (xliv. 6.) The Jehovah that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by himself, (ver. 24.) Yet the Messiah, in this very book, is spoken of as the Redeemer of God's people, in the most eminent manner, (chap. lxiii. 1—6.)

§ 6. God is careful that his people should understand, that their honour, and love, and praise, for the redemption out of Egypt, belongs only to *him*, and, therefore, is careful to inform them, that he *alone* redeemed them out of Egypt, and that there was no other God with him; and to make use of that as a principal argument why they should have no other gods before him. (See Deut. xxxii. 12; Exod. xx. 3; Psal. lxxxi. 8, 9, 10; Hos. xiii. 4.) The words in that place are remarkable: "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me." If God insisted on that as a good reason why his people should know no God besides him, that he alone was their Saviour to save them out of Egypt; would he afterward appoint another to be their Saviour, in an infinitely greater salvation?

§ 7. The works of *creation* being ascribed to Christ, most evidently prove his proper divinity. For God declares, that he is Jehovah that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spread-

* See, also, Hosea viii. 4. See, also, Isaiah xlix. 26. and lx. 16. Deut. xxxiii. 29. Jer. iii. 23. Jonah ii. 8, 9. Psalm iii. 8. Isa. xxv. 9.

eth abroad the earth by himself, Isa. xliv. 24. (See also the next chapter, xlv. 5—6, 12.) And not only is the creation of the world ascribed to Christ often in scripture, but that which in Isaiah is called the new creation, which is here represented as an immensely greater and more glorious work than the old creation, *viz.* the work of redemption, as this prophet himself explains it, (Isa. lxv. 17, 18, 19.) is every where in a most peculiar and distinguishing manner, ascribed to Christ. 2 Peter i. 1. "Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" Εν δικαιοσυνη του Θεϱ ημων και σωτηϱος Ιησου Χϱιστου. Tit. ii. 13. "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Τϱ μεγαλϱ Θεϱ και σωτηϱος ημων Ιησϱ Χϱιστϱ. It is agreeable to the manner of the apostle's expressing himself in both places, to intend one and the same person, viz. *Christ*, under two titles: As when speaking of God the Father, in Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." ὁ Θεος και πατηϱ. See Dr. Goodwin's works, vol. i. p. 93, 94.

§ 8. That passage in Isaiah xl. 13 14. "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord?" proves Christ's divinity; for Christ directs the spirit of the Lord. See John xvi. 13—15, and many other places. Compare the following texts, set in opposite columns; those in the first column are represented as belonging to *God* only, which yet in the second column, are given to Christ.

The name GOD.

Isaiah xlv. 5.	John i. 1.
Isaiah xliv. 8.	Heb. i. 8.
Isaiah xlvi. 9.	Rom. ix. 5.

The name JEHOVAH.

Psalm cii. 25, &c.	Heb. i. 10.
Zech. xi. 12.	Matth. xxvii. 9, 10.
Zech. xii. 10.	John xix. 37.
Isaiah xl. 3.	Mark i. 3.
Hos. i. 7.	Luke ii. 11.

Divine Perfections.

1 Kings viii. 39.	John ii. 24. xvi. 30. Acts i. 24.
Jer. xvii. 10.	Rev. ii. 3.
Isaiah xliv. 6.	Rev. i. 17.
Rev. i. 8.	Rev. xxii. 13.
1 Tim. vi. 15.	Rev. xvii. 14. and xix. 16.

Isaiah x. 21.	Isaiah ix. 6.
Rom. x. 12.	Acts x. 36. Rom. ix. 5.
Psalm xc. 2.	Prov. viii. 22, &c.

Divine Works.

Neh. ix. 6.	John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17.
Gen. i. 1.	Heb. i. 10.

Divine Worship.

Exod. xx. 3.	Heb. i. 6.
Matt. iv. 10. and Gal. iv. 8.	John v. 23.*

§ 9. If Christ in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, he must be from *eternity;* for then he is before the beginning, by which must be meant, the beginning of time; the beginning of that kind of duration which has *beginning* and *following*, before and after, belonging to it. The beginning of created existence, or, *the beginning of the creation which God created*, as the phrase is, Mark iii. 19. In Proverbs viii. 22, it is said, "The Lord possessed me before his works of old;" and therefore before those works which in Genesis i. 1. are said to be made in the beginning. God's eternity is expressed thus, Psalm xc. 2. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst created the earth and the world, even from everlasting." So it is said, Prov. viii. 22, &c. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," &c.

§ 10. That the kingdom of the Messiah is so commonly called the *kingdom of heaven*, is an evidence that the Messiah is God. By the kingdom of heaven is plainly meant a kingdom wherein God doth reign, or is King. The phrase, the kingdom of heaven, seems to be principally taken from Dan. ii. 14. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom;" where the meaning plainly is, after the heads of those four great monarchies have each one had their turn, and erected kingdoms for themselves in their turn, and the last monarchy shall be divided among ten kings; finally, the God of heaven shall take the dominion from them all, and shall set up a kingdom for himself. He shall take the kingdom and shall rule for ever. In this book, chap. iv. 26. it is said, "After that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." The words in the foregoing verse express what is meant: "Until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." Therefore, by the kingdom of heaven which shall be set up, is

* See WATERLAND's answer to some queries.

meant the kingdom wherein God himself shall be the king; not as reigning and administering by other kings or judges, as he was king in the time of the Judges, and in the time of David and Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, &c., and as he always doth in the time of good kings: but he shall set up *his kingdom*, in distinction from all kingdoms or states, wherein the heavens shall rule, or God himself shall be king. And, therefore, the kingdom of heaven is often called the kingdom of God, in the New Testament. And it is abundantly prophesied in the Old Testament, that in the days of the Messiah, God shall take to himself the kingdom, and shall reign as king, in contradistinction to other reigning subordinate beings. And that God himself shall reign on earth, as king among his people, is abundantly manifest from many prophecies.* And in the very prophecy of Daniel, (chap. vii.) where this kingdom, which the Lord of heaven should at last set up (plainly this same kingdom,) is more fully spoken of, it is manifest, that the Messiah is to be the king in that kingdom, who shall reign as vested with full power, and complete kingly authority.†

§ 11. God is several times called in scripture, the *Glory of Israel*, or of God's people; and it is a title peculiar to him, wherein he appears as especially distinguished from false gods. Jer. ii. 11. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." Psalm cvi. 20. "Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass." But we find that Christ, in the New Testament, is spoken of as "the glory of God's people Israel." Luke ii. 23.

§ 12. What is said in Job xix. 25—27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c., is a proof of the divinity of Christ. For here, he whom Job calls his Redeemer, his *God*, is God; "Yet in my flesh shall I see God." But it is very manifest, that Christ is he who is most properly and eminently our Redeemer, or *God:* And here Job says, that God shall stand at the latter day, at the general resurrection on the earth; when he shall see him in his flesh. But the person that shall then stand on the earth, we know, is no other than Jesus Christ. And how often, in other places, both in the Old Testament and the New, is *Christ's* coming to judgment, spoken of as *God's* coming to judgment? Christ's appearing, as God's appearing? and our standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, as our standing before God's judgment seat?

* See Psalm xciii. 1. xcvi. 10. xcvii. at the beginning, and xcix. 1. Isa. xxxiii. 22. Isa. xl. 9, 10, 11. Zeph. iii. 14, 15. Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3.

† See, also, Dan. ix. 25. Gen. xlix. Psalms ii. cx. lxxxix. and xlv. Isaiah ix. and xi. Zech. vi. Jer. xxiii. 5. xxx. 9. and xxxiii. 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5. Zech. vi. 12. &c., and in many other places.

§ 13. Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Here John the Baptist is spoken of as going before the Lord, the God of the children of Israel, to prepare his way; agreeably to the prophecies; particularly, Mal. iii. 1. and iv. 5, 6. But who is this person who is called the Lord, the God of Israel, whose forerunner, John the Baptist, is to prepare his way? Nothing is more manifest, than that it is Jesus Christ. See Mark i. 1—3. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," (alluding to two prophecies, *viz.* Mal. iii. 1. and Isaiah xl. 3.) Here is a distinction of two persons; the one speaking in the first person singular, "Behold, I send my messenger;" the other spoken to in the second person, "before *thy* face, which shall prepare *thy* way before *thee;*" which makes it evident, that the person spoken of, and whose forerunner he was, to prepare his way, was Jesus Christ. So Matt. xi. 10. Luke vii. 27. See, also, how manifest this is by John i. 19. "And this is the record of John." Verse 23. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias;" with the following verses, especially verse 31: "And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel: therefore, am I come baptizing with water." So that it is evident, that Christ is he, that, in the first of Luke is called the Lord, or Jehovah, the God of Israel, as the phrase is in the original of the Old Testament, in places from whence this phrase is taken. Therefore, it is evident, that Christ is one God with the Father; for the scripture is very express, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is but one Jehovah; as Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."

§ 14. And, if we look into those prophecies of the Old Testament, referred to in these places of the evangelists, it is manifest, that what they foretel, concerns a forerunner to prepare the way for the only true and supreme God; as, Isa. xl. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah;* make straight in the desert a high way for *our God.*" This is evidently the same that is spoken of in the following parts of the chapter; as in verse 9, and following verses: "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold *your God;* behold, *Jehovah God* will come. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of

his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment? Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom, then, will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Verse 22. "It is he that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity."—If the supreme God is not spoken of here, where shall we find the place where he is spoken of? If it be an infinitely inferior being, where is God's distinguishing greatness, and infinitely superior magnificence? It here follows, verse 25: "To whom, then, will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." A created being would not use such language, or make such a challenge. He that is created himself, would not say, as it follows in the next verse, "Lift up your eyes on high; behold who hath created those things." So it is evident, that it is the One only God that is spoken of, whose forerunner John was to be. Malachi iii. 1. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME. And *Jehovah*, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple." Luke i. 76. "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the *Highest*, υψιστου; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way."

§ 15. It is a great evidence, that Christ is one being with the Supreme God, that the Spirit of the Supreme God is spoken of as his Spirit, proceeding from, and sent and directed by him. The Spirit by whom the prophets of old were inspired, is spoken of as the Spirit of Christ: 1 Pet. i. 11: "Searching what, or what manner of time, *the Spirit of Christ*, which was in them, did signify; when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But it is very manifest, that this was the Spirit of the one only living and true God; so that we must needs understand, that the word written by the prophets, is the word of the Supreme God. See 2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 16. And that they spoke by inspiration of the Spirit of the Supreme God, is manifest from Luke i. 69, 70. "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by

the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." The word *Spirit*, in the original languages, signifies *wind*, and sometimes is used to signify *breath*. Therefore, Christ breathed on his disciples, when he would signify to them that he would give them the Holy Ghost: John xx. 22. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This plainly teaches us, that the Holy Ghost was his Spirit, as much as man's breath is his breath.

Again, it is evident, that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, as much as a person's eyes are his own eyes. Rev. v. 6. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Alluding to Zech. iii. 9. "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes." But these seven eyes in the next chapter, are spoken of as representing the Spirit of God, and the eyes of Jehovah: chap. iv. 6. "Not by might nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Verse 10. "And shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven. They are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

Christ is spoken of as *sending* the Holy Ghost, and *directing* him: John xvi. 7. "I will send him unto you." Verse 13, 14, 15. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he shall show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." But it is spoken of as the peculiar prerogative of God to direct his Spirit. Isai. xl. 13. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord?"*

§ 16. It is true, that creatures are sometimes called *gods*. The kings and judges of God's Israel, the ancient Church, are called gods; but no otherwise than as types of Christ. And the angels are called gods. Yet it is very remarkable, that in that only place where they are so called by God, they are commanded to *worship Christ;* and, in the same verse, a curse is denounced on all such as are guilty of idolatry. Psalm xcvii. 7. compared with Heb. i. 6.

§ 17. God so often speaking of himself as a *jealous* God—signifying that he will by no means endure any other husband of his Church—affords a clear evidence, that Jesus Christ is the same God with the Father. For Christ is often spoken of as that person who is, in the most eminent and peculiar manner,

* See Section 8.

the Husband and Bridegroom of his Church. That God, who is the Holy One of Israel, is the husband of the Church, as appears by Isaiah, liv. 5: "Thy maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Or, as the words are, "Thy Goel, the Holy One of Israel." The goel was the near kinsman, that married the widow who had lost her husband, as appears by Ruth iii. 9—12. But this Holy One of Israel, is the name of that God who is the Father, as appears by Isaiah xlix. 7. and lv. 5; and so is the Lord of Hosts, as appears by Isaiah xliv. 6.

§ 18. Christ is the Lord, mentioned in Rom. x. 13. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." That it is Christ who is spoken of, is evident from the two foregoing verses; and, also, from the 14th. But the words are taken from Joel ii. 32; where the word translated Lord, is Jehovah. See, also, 1 Cor. i. 2.

§ 19. And I Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted." By this, it appears, that Christ was that God, that Holy One of Israel, whom they tempted in the wilderness. 1 Cor. x. 22. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" It is evident, that by the Lord here, is meant Jesus Christ, as appears by the preceding context; and that, therefore, He is that Being who says, I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God."

§ 20. Rev. ii. 23. Christ says, "I am he that trieth the reins and the heart, and will give to every one of you according to his works." This is said by the Son of God, as appears by the 18th verse foregoing. Compare this with other passages of Scripture, where those things are spoken of as the prerogative of the Supreme God. Parallel with it, is John xxi. 17. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love Thee."

§ 21. It would be unreasonable to suppose, that there is one Being infinitely greater than all other beings—so that all others are as nothing to him, and infinitely beneath him in power—and yet, that there is no kind of works, or effects of his power, that is peculiar to him, by which he is greatly distinguished from others. He that appeared sitting on the throne above the cherubims and wheels in Ezekiel's visions, (Ezek. i. 27. and other places,) was undoubtedly Christ; because he appeared in the shape of a man, which God the Father never did. "No man hath seen God, *viz* the Father, at any time;" but the person that there appeared, was undoubtedly God. He is represented as one that has heaven for his throne, and sits as Supreme Ruler of the universe. This is undoubtedly the same that rides on the heavens in the help of his people, and in his excellency on the sky; that rides on the heaven of heavens by his name Jah, or Jehovah. And this is called the

appearance of the likeness, or image of the glory of the Lord; Ezek. i. 28. iii. 23. and viii. 4. This, while it shows him to be a person truly divine, also shows him to be Christ. For what can this image of the Lord, with an appearance of brightness round about, (ver. 27, 28.) be, but the same which the apostle speaks of, who is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person?" And this is evidently the same that sat on the throne in the temple, which was called the Chariot of the Cherubims. And this person is called the God of Israel, Ezek. x. 20; and the whole that this person says to Ezekiel, from time to time, shows that he is truly God.

§ 22. It is a great evidence of the divinity of Christ, that the Holy Ghost is so put into subjection to him, as to become his messenger; even the Spirit of God, as the Holy Ghost is often called, or the Spirit of the Father, as he is called, Matt. x. 20. The same that is there called the Spirit of the Father, is, in Mark xiii. 11, called the Holy Ghost. Now, certainly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Spirit of the Supreme God should be put under the direction and disposal of a mere creature, one infinitely below God. The only evasion here, must be this, that the Holy Ghost is also a created spirit inferior to the Son. For if Christ be a mere creature, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that he should have the Spirit of God subjected to him, on any other supposition, whether the Spirit of God be supposed to be only the power and energy of the Most High, or a superior created Spirit. But how does the Holy Ghost, being a creature inferior to the Son, consist with Christ's being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost? and his being honoured by having the Holy Ghost descending upon him? and being anointed with it, and working his greatest miracles by the power of the Holy Ghost? and its being a great honour done to Christ, that the Spirit was given to him not by measure? Besides, the Holy Ghost being a creature, not only infinitely inferior to God, but inferior to the Son, is exceedingly inconsistent with almost every thing said of the Holy Spirit in Scripture; as, his being called the Power of the Highest; his searching all things, even the deep things of God, and knowing the things of God in the most distinguishing manner, as the spirit of man within him knows the things of a man; the Scripture's being the word of God, as it is the word of the Holy Ghost; Christians being the temple of the living God, as they are the temple of the Holy Ghost; lying unto the Holy Ghost, being called lying unto God; the chief works of God being ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as the works of creation, and the forming of man in the womb. (Eccles. xi. 5; Job xxxiii. 4.) Giving the highest sort of wisdom, *viz.* spiritual understanding; forming the human nature of Christ; being the author of regeneration and sanctification; creating a new

heart, and so being the author of the new creation, which is spoken of as vastly greater than the old.

Blasphemy against the Father is pardonable; but not against the Holy Ghost. It is unreasonable to suppose that only the body of Christ was made by the Holy Ghost. It is evident, that the whole human nature, the holy thing that was born of the virgin, was by the Holy Ghost; Luke i. 35. But the Son of the virgin was a holy thing, especially with regard to his soul. The soul of Adam was from the spirit of God, from God's breathing into him the breath of life. But this breath of life signifies the Spirit of God, as appears by Christ's breathing on his disciples after his resurrection, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of God is called the breath of God; Job xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me; the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." If God's Spirit gives life to other men, or mankind in general, doubtless he gave life to Adam. And if that Spirit of God which gives life to mankind in general, be, in doing that work called the breath of God; we may well suppose, that when we find that which gave life and soul to Adam, called God's breath, thereby was meant God's Spirit.

§ 23. How unreasonable must our notions be of our creation of the world, on Arian principles? For it is manifest in the Scripture, that the world was made by the Spirit of God, as well as by the Son of God. But the Son of God is, according to them, a created Spirit; and the Spirit of God must therefore also be a created Spirit inferior to him.—Therefore we must suppose, that the Father created the world by the Son, and that the Son did not create the world by himself, but by the Spirit of God as his minister or instrument. So that the Spirit of God herein must act as the instrument of an instrument!

§ 24. It is evident that the same Word, the same Son of God, that made the world, also upholds it in being, and governs it. This is evident, in part, unto reason. For upholding the world in being, and creating it, are not properly distinct works; since it is manifest, that upholding the world in being is the same with a *continued creation;* and consequently, that creating the world, is but the *beginning* of upholding it, if I may so say—beginning to give it a supported and dependent existence—and preservation is only continuing to give it such a supported existence. So that, truly, giving the world a being at first, no more differs from preserving it through all successive moments, than giving a being the *last* moment, differs from giving a supported being *this* moment. And the Scripture is as express, that the world is upheld by Christ, as that it was created by him; Colos. i. 16, 17. "For by him were all things created, and by him all things consist." Heb. i. 2, 3. "By whom also he made the worlds, and upholding all things by the

word of his power. And it is He that shall bring the world to an end." Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, &c. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure. As a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

But if these things are so, what shall we think of the upholding and government of the world, while Christ was in his humbled state, and while an infant, and when we are told that he was wearied with his journey, and his strength in some measure spent, only with governing the motions of his own body? Who upheld and governed the world at that time? Doubtless, it will be said, that God the Father took the world out of the hands of the Son for that time, to uphold and govern it, and returned it into his hands again at his exaltation. But, is there any ground to suppose such a mighty change as this, as to the author of the universe, that it should have such different authors of its being, and of all its properties, natural principles, motions, alterations, and events, both in bodies and all created minds, for three or four and thirty years, from what it had ever before or since? Have we any hint of such a thing? or, have we any revelation of any thing analogous? Has God ever taken the work of a creature out of its hands, according to the ordinary course of things?

§ 25. The Supreme God is doubtless distinguished by some works or other. As he must be infinitely distinguished from all other beings in his *nature;* so, doubtless, there are some *manifestations* or other of this vast superiority above all other beings. But we can have no other proper manifestations of the divine nature, but by some *effects* of it. The invisible things of God are seen by the things that are made. The word of God itself is no demonstration of the superior distinguishing glory of the Supreme God, any otherwise than by his works; and that two ways: 1. As we must have the perfections first proved by his works, in order to know that his word is to be depended on. 2. As the works of God, appealed to and declared in his word, make evident that divine greatness and glory which the word of God declares. There is a difference between declaration and evidence. The *word* declares; but the *works* are the proper evidence of what is declared.

Undoubtedly, therefore, the vastly distinguished glory of the Supreme God, is manifested by some distinguishing peculiar works of his. That the Supreme God is distinguished very remarkably and most evidently from all other beings, by some works or other, is certain by the Scripture. It is often represented, that he most plainly and greatly shows his distinguishing majesty, power, and wisdom, and vast superiority to other beings, by his works that are seen, and set in the view of the

children of men. So Psalm lxxxi. 8: "Among the gods, there is none like unto thee, neither are there any works like unto thy works;" see, also, verse 10. Psalm lxxxix. 5, 8, 9, 10. "The heavens shall praise thy wonders:—for who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? who amongst the sons of the mighty, can be likened unto the Lord? O Lord of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Deut. iii. 24. What God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?" Psalm lxxii. 18. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things." This is often added to the declarations of God's works, "*That ye may know that I am the Lord, or that I am Jehovah.*" And this "*That ye may know that there is none like unto me*," &c. Exod. viii. 10. 22. chap. ix. 14. 16. and x. 2. and innumerable other places.

§ 26. But now, what are these distinguishing works of God? or the works by which his distinguishing dignity and glory are clearly manifested? What works are they that can be named or thought of? Is it CREATING the world? Or, is it the creating of the spiritual, intellectual world, which, undoubtedly, is an unspeakably greater work, than creating the material world? Is it PRESERVING and upholding the world? or is it GOVERNING the world? Or, is it REDEMPTION and salvation; or, at least, some particular great salvation? Was it the redemption out of Egypt, and carrying the people of Israel through the wilderness, and giving them the possession of Canaan? Or, is it the greatest work of redemption, even salvation from spiritual, total, and eternal destruction, and bringing to eternal holiness and glory? Is it conversion, regeneration, restoring a fallen, sinful creature, and making men new creatures, giving them holiness, and the image of God? or giving wisdom to the heart, the truest and greatest wisdom? Is it the conversion of the Gentile world, and renewing the whole world of mankind, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles? Or, is it conquering Satan and all the powers of darkness, and overcoming all evil, even the strongest holds of sin and Satan, all God's enemies in their united strength? Is it searching the hearts of the children of men? Is it working any particular kind of great miracles? Is it raising the dead to life, or raising all in general at the last day? Is it judging the world, angels, and men, in the last and greatest judgment? Is it bestowing on the favourites of God, both men and angels, their highest, most consummate, and eternal glory? Is it destroying the visible creation, and bringing all to their final period and consummation, and to their most perfect and eternal state? Or, are there any other works greater than these, that can be thought of, which we can find

appealed to as clearly manifesting the most peculiar and distinguishing glory of the Supreme God, in comparison of whom all other beings whatsoever are absolutely as nothing? Yet all these are ascribed to Christ.

§ 27. The *creation* of the world in general, is often spoken of as the *peculiar* work of the Supreme God; a work wherein he manifests his glory as supreme, and distinguished from all other beings: Rom. i. 16, 20. "Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them. For God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Doubtless, it is the Supreme God who is here spoken of. And what godhead is clearly to be seen by the creation of the world, but the supreme Godhead? And what can that invisible glory and power of this God be, but that by which he is distinguished from other beings, and may be known to be what he is? It is said, "that which may be known of God, is clearly manifest by his works." But, doubtless, one thing, and infinitely the most important, that may be known of God, is his supreme dignity and glory, that glory which he has as Supreme God. But if the creation of the world be not a work peculiar to him, how are these things so clearly manifested by his work? The work of creation is spoken of as one of the great wonders done by Him, who is God of gods, and Lord of lords, who alone doeth great wonders; as in Psal. cxxxvi. 2—9: "O give thanks unto the God of gods. O give thanks to the Lord of lords. To him who alone doeth great wonders. To him that by wisdom made the heavens. To him that stretched out the earth over the waters. To him that made great lights,—the Sun to rule by day," &c. This is the work of the Supreme God, which he wrought *alone*, Job ix. 8. "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens." And 2 Kings xix. 15. "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth." 1 Chron. xvi. 24, 25, 26. "Declare his glory among the Heathen, his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. He is also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: But the Lord made the heavens."—Isaiah xl. 25, 26. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." How plain is it here, that creating the world is spoken of as a work of the Supreme God, most evidently showing, that none is like him, or to be compared to him? So verse 12, compared with verse 18. God asserts the creation of the world, to be his work, so as to deny any associate, or *instrument*;

as in Isaiah xliv. 24. "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am Jehovah, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*." Isaiah xiv. 5—7. "I am Jehovah, and there is none else; there is no God besides me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light and create darkness." Verse 12. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens." Verse 18. "Thus saith Jehovah, that created the heavens, God himself, that formed the earth, and made it." Verse 21. "I am Jehovah, and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." Yet these works are applied to Christ.

§ 28. God's creating the world, is used as an argument, to show the nations of the world the reasonableness of forsaking all other gods, and worshipping the One true God only. Rev. xiv. 7. "Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (See, also, Acts xiv. 15. and Rev. x. 6.)—The work of creation is spoken of as the distinguishing work of the Supreme, only Living, and True God, showing him to be alone worthy to be worshipped; as in Jer. x. 6—12. "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; Thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain. Jehovah is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King.—Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power; He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."

§ 29. But the *creation* of the world is ascribed to Jesus Christ, in John i. 3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 10. It is ascribed to him as being done by his power, as the work of his hands, Heb. i. 10. And his work in such a manner, as to be a proper manifestation of his greatness and glory; and so as to show him to be God, John i. 1—3. Is the creation of the spiritual, intelligent world, consisting of angels, and the souls of men, and the world of glory, a *peculiar* work of the Supreme God? Doubtless it is so. Neh. ix. 6. "Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with *all their host:* And the host of heaven worshippeth Thee." Psalm civ. 4. "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." And the creation of the spiritual and intelligent world, in every part of it, is also ascribed to Christ.

For it is said, John i. 3. "The world was made by him, and, without him, was not any thing made that was made." And to him is expressly ascribed the creation of the invisible world, and of the angels in particular, even the very highest and most exalted of them; and all the most glorious things in the invisible heaven, the highest and most glorious part of the creation of God. Col. i. 16. "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible," (these include the invisible things on earth, as well as in heaven, even the souls of men;) "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him."

§ 30. *Preserving* the creation, is spoken of as the work of the One only Jehovah, Neh. ix. 6. "Thou, even Thou, art Jehovah alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; and Thou *preservest them all.*" Isaiah xl. 26. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power, not one faileth." Job xii. 7—10. "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of Jehovah hath made this? in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." See, also, Psalm xxxvi. 6, 7.

But the preservation of the creation is also ascribed to Christ; Heb. i. 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." Colos. i. 17. "By him all things consist."

§ 31. *Governing* the creation, is another thing often spoken of as the *peculiar* work of God; as in Isaiah xl. 21. to the end. There, governing the world, is the manifest peculiar work of him to whom none is like, and none equal. And, in Isaiah xlv. 1—13, governing the world, bringing to pass revolutions in nations, &c., are spoken of as the peculiar works of Him who is Jehovah alone. See 2 Chron. xxix. 11, 12; and Psalm xxii. 28; xlvii. 2, &c. But Christ is often, in the New Testament, spoken of as the *Governor* of the world, is prayed to as such, and spoken of as He whose will disposes all events.

Sitting as king in heaven, having his throne there, and governing the universe for the salvation of his people, are spoken of as peculiar to the supreme God. But, how often and eminently are these things ascribed to Christ! His having his throne in heaven; being exalted far above all heavens; thrones, dominions, &c., being made subject to him; being made head over all things to the church, &c.

§ 32. *Judging* the world, is another thing spoken of, as peculiarly and distinguishingly belonging to the Supreme God.* Psalm l. 1—7. "The mighty God, even Jehovah, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Our God shall come; a fire shall devour before him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people: And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is Judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against thee. I am God, even thy God." This 50th Psalm begins thus: EL ELOHIM JEHOVAH, "The God of gods, Jehovah; or the Most Mighty God, even JEHOVAH." Who can believe that these three most magnificent names of the Deity are thus united, to signify any other than the Supreme God?†

But it is apparent, that Christ is abundantly spoken of as eminently the Judge of all nations, of all degrees, quick and dead, angels and men. We are particularly and fully instructed, that it is his distinguishing office to judge the world, John v. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. xix. 11; and many other places.

§ 33. *Destroying* the world at the consummation of all things, is spoken of as a *peculiar* work of God; Psalm cii. even of Jehovah, ver. 1, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22; the Creator of the world, ver. 24, 25, 28. See, also, Psalm xcvii. 1—6. and Neh. i. 4, 5, 6. Jer. x. 6, 7, 10. Psalm xlvi. 6; civ. 32; cxliv. 5. Isa. lxiv. 1, 2, 3. Job ix. 4—7. But this is spoken of as the work of the *Son of God*, Heb. i. latter end.

§ 34. The wonderful *alterations* made in the *natural world*, at the coming out of Egypt; the giving of the law, and entrance into Canaan, are often spoken of as the *peculiar* works of God, greatly manifesting the divine majesty, as vastly distinguished from all other gods; such as, dividing the sea; drowning Pharaoh and his hosts there; causing the earth to tremble, the mountains to quake at his presence, the heavens to drop, the hills to skip like rams and lambs; Jordan being driven back; the sun and moon standing still, &c.

But these were infinitely small things, in comparison with what shall be accomplished at the end of the world, when the mountains and hills shall be thrown into the midst of the sea: and not only some particular mountains shall quake, but the whole earth, yea, the whole visible world, shall be terribly shaken to pieces. Not only shall Mount Sinai be on fire, as if it would melt, but all the mountains, and the whole earth and heavens shall melt with fervent heat; the earth shall be

* See 1 Sam. 2, 3, 10. Job. xxi. 22. Psalm xi. 4, 5. lxxv. 6, 7. lxxxii. 1, 8. Judg. xi. 27. Psalm xciv. 2.

† See, also, Psalm ix. 7, 8. 1 Chron. xvi. 25, 26—33. Psalm xcvi. 4, 5—13. Also, Psalm xcviii.

dissolved even to its centre. And not only shall the Red Sea and Jordan be dried up for a few hours, in a small part of their channels, but all the seas, and oceans, and rivers, through the world, shall be dried up for ever. Not only shall the sun and moon be stopped for the space of one day; but they, with all the innumerable mighty globes of the heavens, shall have an everlasting arrest, an eternal stop put to their courses. Instead of drowning Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, the devil and all the wicked shall be plunged into the eternal lake of fire and brimstone, &c.

The former kind of effects were but little, faint shadows of the latter. And the former are spoken of as the peculiar, manifest, glorious works of the Supreme One only God, evidently manifesting his peculiar majesty and glory. But the latter are the works of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as is evident by Heb. i. 10—12. It is here worthy to be remarked, that, though the scripture teaches, that Christ's majesty shall, at the last day, appear to be so great in his coming in power and great glory, yet, it is said, when these things shall be, *God alone* should be exalted, in opposition to *men* and to *other gods*, Isaiah ii. 10. to the end.

§ 35. The work of *salvation*, is often spoken of as *peculiar* to God. It is said, the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, Psal. xxxvii. 39; and that salvation belongeth unto the Lord, Psal. iii. 8; Jonah ii. 9. God's people acknowledge him to be the God of their salvation, Psal. xxv. 5. xxvii. 1, and Isaiah xii. 2. Saving effectually is spoken of as his prerogative, Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Psal. lxviii. 20. "He that is our God, is the God of salvation, and to the Lord our God belong the issues from death."

Salvation is spoken of as being of God, in opposition to *men*, and to all *creature* helps, Jer. iii. 23. "Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: Truly, in the Lord our God, is the salvation of Israel." Psal. lx. 11. "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help (Heb. salvation) of man." Ver. 16. "I, Jehovah, am thy Saviour." Psal. cxlvi. 3, 5. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom is no help (or salvation.) Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Salvation in or by any other is denied, Isa. lix. 16. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him."

It is spoken of as his prerogative, to be the *rock* of salvation, to be *trusted* in by men. "Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." See Psal. xcv. 1. lxii. 2. "He

only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence." Ver. 5—9. "My soul, wait thou on God *alone*, for my expectation is from him. He *only* is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence, I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."*

It is said, that there is no *other Saviour* besides the One only Jehovah; Isa. xliii. 3. I am Jehovah thy God, the Saviour of Israel;" xliii. 11. "I, even I, am Jehovah, and *besides* me there is no Saviour." See Isa. xlvii. 4. liv. 5. and xlv. 15. "O God of Israel, the Saviour." Ver. 21. to the end; "I, Jehovah, and there is no God else besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Here observe, that this is given as a reason why all nations in the world should look to him *only* for salvation: That he *only* was God; taking it for granted, and as an universally established point, that none but *God* could be a *Saviour*. And here salvation is claimed as the prerogative of the One only God, and, therefore, *exclusively* of a secondary and subordinate God. It follows, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return; that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength. Even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Hosea xiii. 4. "Yet I am Jehovah, thy God from the land of Egypt: and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is *no Saviour besides me*."

God is so completely the *only Saviour* of his people, that others are not admitted to partake of this honour, as mediate and subordinate saviours: Hos. i. 7. And, therefore, the heavenly hosts, in giving praise to God, ascribe salvation to him, as his *peculiar* and distinguishing glory; Rev. xix. 1. I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God."

§ 36. But nothing is more evident, by the express and abundant doctrine of Scripture, than that Jesus Christ is most eminently and *peculiarly* the Saviour of God's people, and the Saviour of the world. In John iv. 42. his very name is *Jesus, Saviour*. He is spoken of as the Author of eternal salvation,

* See Deut. xxxii. 4. 2 Sam xxiii. 3. Psal. xviii. 2. 2 Sam. xxii. 1, 2, 31, 32. Psal. xviii. 2, 30, 31, 46. Isa. xxvi. 4. Heb. i. 12.

Heb. v. 9. And the Captain of the salvation of his people, Heb. ii. 10. a Prince and a Saviour. He is called Zion's salvation, Isa. lxii. 11: "Behold, thy salvation cometh." He is spoken of, as saving by his own strength, and able to save to the uttermost; One mighty to save, and therein distinguished from all others; as in Isa. lxiii. 1. "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Ver. 5. "I looked and there was none to uphold. Therefore, *mine own arm* brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me." What is said in this place, is meant of Christ, as is manifest by comparing ver. 3. with Rev. xix. 15. And the very same things that are said of Jehovah, the only God, as the only Saviour in whom men shall trust for salvation, as in Isaiah xlv. 21. to the end, are, from time to time, applied to Christ in the New Testament. And, it is expressly said, Acts iv. 12: "There is salvation *in no other*, neither is there any other name given under heaven amongst men, whereby we must be saved." And the heavenly hosts, in their praises, ascribe salvation to Christ in like manner as to God the Father, Rev. vii. 10. "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." See, also, chap. v. Christ is a rock sufficiently sure, and perfectly to be trusted, Isa. xxviii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. x. 4.

§ 37. The redemption from Egypt, and bringing the children of Israel through the wilderness to the possession of Canaan, is often spoken of as a great salvation, which was most evidently the *peculiar* work of the One only Jehovah, greatly manifesting his distinguished power and majesty.—2 Sam. vii. 22, 23. "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee; according to all that we have heard with our ears;" meaning what they had heard of his great fame, or the name he had obtained by his wonderful works, in bringing them out of Egypt, &c., as appears by what follows: "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" The same work is mentioned as an evidence, that the doer of it is Jehovah, and that there is none like unto him, and as that which makes known God's name through the earth; Exod. viii. 10, 22. ix. 14, 16. and x. 2.—See, also, chap. xv. 6—11. xviii. 11. and xxxiv. 10. Deut. iii. 24.

§ 38. But it was Jesus Christ that wrought that salvation; Isa. lxiii. 9, 10. "The angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them, and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." This rebelling and vexing of his Holy Spirit, is evidently the same thing with that spoken of, Psalm xcv. 8,

9, 10. "As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with that generation." But it is evident, that he whom they tempted, provoked, and grieved, was that God whose great works they saw, and, therefore, was that God who wrought those wonderful works in Egypt, and the wilderness: As is evident by the same Psalm, ver. 3, where he is called "Jehovah, a great God, and a great King above all gods." And it is equally clear by that passage in Isa. lxiii. just quoted, that it was the *Angel of God's presence*, and by I Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted."

And, as it is said, Isa. lxiii. that the Angel of God's presence saved them, &c., so it is plain, by Exod. xxiii. 20—33. that God's Angel, a dfferent person from him who acts as first in the affairs of the Deity, brought them into Canaan, &c. And it is plain, that the person that appeared in the bush, who said his name was *Jehovah*, and *I am that I am*, was the Angel of Jehovah: Exod. iii. 2, 14. vi. 3. and Acts vii. 30. And nothing is more evident, by the whole history, than that the same person brought them out of Egypt; and, also, that it was the same Angel which appeared and delivered the ten commandments at Mount Sinai, conversed there with Moses, and manifested himself from time to time to the congregation in the wilderness. Acts vii. 38. "This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness, with the Angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." That angel, doubtless, was the same that is called the Angel of the Covenant; Mal. iii. 1. "Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts:" And this messenger, without doubt, was Christ.—It is plain, by Heb. xii. 25, 26, 27, that he who spake at Mount Sinai, was Christ: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh," &c.

§ 39. Thus we see, that however the work of salvation be so often spoken of as *peculiar* to God; yet this salvation out of Egypt, so much celebrated in scripture, is not peculiar to God the Father; but the Son wrought this work as well as the Father. And it is true, that the scriptures abundantly speak of an infinitely greater and more glorious salvation than that out of Egypt; *viz.* the salvation of men from sin, Satan, eternal death, and ruin, and bringing them to the heavenly Canaan, to eternal life and happiness there. This is spoken of as a far greater work than the other. So that, in comparison of it, it is not worthy to be remembered or mentioned. Jer. xvi. 14, 15. "It shall no more be said, the Lord liveth," &c. See.

also, chap. xxiii. 6—8. Isaiah xliii. 18—21. "Remember ye not the former things," &c. But I need not stop to show the reader how this great salvation is, in scripture, ascribed in a *peculiar* manner to *Christ* as the author.

§ 40. We read in scripture of two *creations:* The *first*, that which Moses gives an account of in the first chapter of Genesis; the *other*, a spiritual creation, consisted in restoring the moral world, bringing it to its highest perfection, and establishing it in its eternal felicity and glory; and the latter is spoken of as most incomparably the greatest work; Isaiah lxv. 17, 18. and lxvi. 22. Now, as creation is so much spoken of as a most peculiar work of the Supreme God, one may well determine, that if the first creation be not so, yet the second is, which is so much greater, and evidently the greatest of all God's works.

But this new creation, which is the same with the work of redemption, is, in the most especial manner, spoken of as the work of Jesus: for he is ever mentioned as the great Redeemer and Restorer. This work is committed to him: for this, he has a full commission. It is left in his hands; all things are committed to him; all power, in heaven and in earth, is given him, that he may accomplish this work, and bring it to its most absolute perfection. To this end are subjected to him, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and he is made Head over all things; and, to this end, the world to come, that is, all the affairs of that new creation, are put in subjection unto him: And he, with regard to all the transactions belonging to this new creation, that are written in the book of God, is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Christ built the house; he built all things, especially in this new creation; and, therefore, is God. These things are plainly asserted in Heb. iii. 3, 4. "For this man, (rather, this *person*,) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things, is God." Thus, the work of redemption, which is both the greatest work of salvation, and the greatest work of creation, (the two kinds of works chiefly spoken of in scripture as divine,) is accomplished by the Son of God.

§ 41. The giving of spiritual and saving *light*, is one chief part of the new creation, as creating the light was a chief part of the old creation. The causing of this spiritual light, is spoken of as the peculiar work of God. 2 Cor. iv. 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," &c. But the giving of this light is especially ascribed to Christ, as the Author and Fountain of it. He is called the Light of the world; the Light of life; the true Light, that lighteth every man that

cometh into the world. He is the Sun of Righteousness. No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, &c.

§ 42. So *calling* men into Christ's fellowship and kingdom, is also ascribed to God. Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did predestinate, them He also called." Acts ii. 39. "As many as the Lord our God shall call." 1 Cor. i. 9. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Thess. ii. 12. "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory." 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation; whereunto He called you by our gospel." 2 Tim. i. 9. "According to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." 1 Pet. v. 10. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory."

But this is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Rom. i. 6. "Among whom, also, ye are called of Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. vii. 17. "As the Lord hath called every one." John x. 3. "And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." Verse 16. "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them, also, I must bring in; and they shall hear my voice." Eph. i. 18. "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling."

§ 43. *Regeneration*, or the changing and renewing of the heart, is spoken of as the peculiar work of God. John i. 13. "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." James i. 18. "Of his own will, begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

It is, likewise, ascribed to Christ. Saints are born of Him in their spiritual generation, and, therefore, are called his seed; Gal. iii. 29. It is Christ that baptizes men with the Holy Ghost, which is called the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and a being born of water and of the Spirit. Christ sanctifies and cleanses the souls of men, by the washing of water, by the word; Eph. v. 26.

§ 44. *Justification*, washing from sin, delivering from guilt, forgiving sin, admitting to favour, and to the glorious benefits of righteousness in the sight of God, are often spoken of as belonging peculiarly to God. Rom. iii. 26. "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Verse 30. "Seeing it is one God that justifieth," &c. Chap. viii. 30. "Whom he called, he also justified." Verse 33. "It is God that justifieth." Isaiah xliii. 25. "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." Psalm li. 2—4. "Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: "against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned."

Therefore the Jews said, Luke v. 21. "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

But Christ hath power to forgive sins, as it follows in the last mentioned place; verse 24. "But that ye may know, that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins," &c. He washes us from our sins in his own blood; Rev. i. 5. And he justifies those that know and believe in him, Isaiah liii. 11.

§ 45. *Overcoming Satan*, and delivering men from him, and giving his people victory over him, are spoken of as the peculiar works of God's glorious power. Isaiah xxvii. 1. "In that day, Jehovah, with his great and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan, that crooked serpent; he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Psalm viii. 1, 2. "O Jehovah, our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

But it is the special work of Christ to bruise the serpent's head; to destroy the works of the devil; and that by his own strength. For he is represented as conquering him, because he is stronger than the strong man armed, and so overcoming him and taking from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and spoiling his goods. It is He that has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them. He is the spiritual Samson, that has rent the roaring lion as he would have rent a kid; and the spiritual David, that has delivered the lamb out of his mouth, and has slain that great Goliath. He is that Michael who fights with the dragon and casts him out; and, at last, will judge Satan, and will utterly destroy him; and will inflict those everlasting torments on him spoken of in Rev. xx. 10. In the apprehension of which, he now trembles, and trembled for fear that Christ would inflict those torments on him, when he cried out and fell down before him, saying, "Art thou come to torment me before the time?" And "I beseech thee, torment me not."

§ 46. Should any imagine, that those parts of the work of redemption, which are initial, and wrought in this world, being more imperfect, may be wrought by the Son of God; but that the more glorious perfection of it, which is brought to pass in heaven, is peculiar to God the Father: In opposition to this, it may be observed, it belongs to Christ to take care of the souls of his saints after death; to receive them to the heavenly state; and to give them possession of heaven. Therefore, the scriptures represent, that he redeems his saints to God, and makes them kings and priests. He has the key of David, the key of the palace, and the keys of Hades, or the separate state, and of death; and opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no

man opens. He is gone to heaven, as the forerunner of the saints. He has, in their name, taken possession of that inheritance which he has purchased for them, that he may put them in possession of it in due time. He is gone to prepare a place for them, that he may come and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also; and make them sit with him in his throne. And, therefore, Stephen, when dying, commended his spirit into Christ's hands.

Or, if any shall say, that the far more glorious salvation which shall be effected at the end of the world, when all things shall be brought to their highest consummation, shall be the peculiar work of God the Father: I answer, it is abundantly manifest from scripture, that the consummation of all things shall be by Christ. He shall raise the dead by his voice, as one that has power and life in himself. He shall raise up the bodies of his saints in their glorious resurrection, making their bodies like to his glorious body; John v. 25, 29, and vi. 39, 40. He, as the universal and final Judge, shall fully put all things to rights; and bring every thing to its last and most perfect state. He shall bestow that great gift of eternal life, in both soul and body, on the whole church, and every individual member, in a state of most consummate glory, which is the thing aimed at in all the preceding steps of the great affair of redemption. He shall present his church to Himself, and to his Father, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; all in perfect purity, beauty, and glory: and the glory which God hath given him, he will give them in the most perfect manner, that they may reign with him for ever and ever. And thus, he will cause the new Jerusalem to appear in its brightest glory, as a bride adorned for her husband; and will perfect the new creation, and cause the new heavens and new earth to shine forth in their consummate and eternal beauty and brightness; when God shall proclaim, *It is done;* I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.* Christ is represented as being himself the light and glory that enlightens the New Jerusalem, that fills with brightness and glory the church of God, in its last, consummate, and eternal glory: Rev. xxi. 23.

§ 47. Concerning the name JEHOVAH, see Neh. ix. 6. "Thou art *Jehovah alone:* Thou hast made heaven and earth; the heaven of heavens with all their host; the earth," &c. Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one *Jehovah.*" 2 Sam. xxii. 32. "Who is God save *Jehovah?* who is a rock, save our God?" So Psalm xviii. 31. 1 Kings xviii. 39. "*Jehovah*, he is

* John xi. 25, and v. 22, 23, 27; Eph. v. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 20—23. Matt. xxv. 34. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Luke xxii. 29. 33. Matt. xxiv. 47. Rev. ii. 7, 10, and iii. 21. Rev. xxii. 11, 17.

the God : *Jehovah*, he is the God." When God proclaimed his name in Mount Sinai, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6. " He passed by and proclaimed, *Jehovah*, *Jehovah*." Jer. x. 10. " *Jehovah* is the true God ; he is the livingGod, and an everlasting King." Exod. xv. 11. " Who is like unto Thee, O *Jehovah ?*" I Chron. xvii. 20. " O *Jehovah*, there is none like unto Thee." Psalm lxxxvi. 8. It might well be expected, that, in that abundant revelation which God has made of himself, he would make himself known by some one name at least, which should be expressly delivered, as the peculiar and distinguishing name of the Most High. And we find it to be so ; God has with great solemnity, declared a certain name as his most peculiar name ; which he has expressly and very often spoken of as a name that belongs to him in a most distinguishing manner, and belongs to the Supreme Being only ; and hath expressly asserted that it belongs to no other. But, notwithstanding all this, the Arians, to serve their particular purpose, reject this name, as not being the distinguishing name of the Supreme God.

§ 48. *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*, are titles peculiar to the Supreme Being. Deut. x. 17. " For the Lord your God is God of gods, and the Lord of lords." Psalm cxxxvi. 3. " O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his mercy endureth for ever." Dan. ii. 47. " Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and Lord of kings." 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15, 16. " Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see ; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen." Rev. xix. 11—16. " He whose name is called the *Word of God*, hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

§ 49. *Christ's eternity* is abundantly asserted. Psalm cii. 24—27. " Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands : but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Rom. i. 23. " The incorruptible God." 1 Tim. vi. 26. " The king eternal, immortal." Rev. iv. 9, 10. v. 14. x. 5, 6. and xv. 7. Heb. vii. 2. " Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life."

§ 50. There must be a vast difference, not only in the degree, but in the kind of respect and worship due to the Supreme God, as well as in other things ; since there is so infinite a difference between this Being and all others. There is a great difference as to the kind of respect proper for a wife to render to her husband, and that which it is proper for her to render towards other men. So it is with regard to the respect due to God : otherwise there would not be a foundation for that *jea-*

lousy which God exercises on occasion of his professing people worshipping other beings.

In addition to what has been observed of the *works* and *worship* of God, the following sayings of Christ are worthy to be observed. John v. 17. "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." Verse 19. "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Ver. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." It is plain, God is *jealous* in that respect, that no other being may share with him in honour, that he alone may be exalted. It is expected that other beings should humble themselves, should be brought low, should deny themselves for God, and esteem themselves as nothing before him. And as he requires that they should abase themselves, he would not set up others to exalt them to a rivalship with himself. If men may pray to Christ, may adore him, give themselves up to him, trust in him, praise him, and serve him; what kind of worship is due to the Father, entirely distinct from all this in nature and kind?

When Satan tempted Christ to fall down and worship him, as one that had power to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; Christ replies, "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But the Arians must suppose, that we are required to worship and serve some other being than this Lord God which Christ speaks of, as the disposer not only of the kingdoms of this world, but of the kingdom of heaven and the glory thereof. On the supposition of Christ's being merely a creature, he would much more properly be ranked with creatures exclusively, and never with God, (as being called by his name and titles, having ascribed to him his attributes, dominions, &c.) However great a *creature* he might be, he would be infinitely below God.

§ 51. Concerning the grand *objection* from that text, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, nor the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father:" I would observe, that even the Arians themselves, with regard to some things said of Christ, must make the distinction between his power or knowledge, as to his inferior and his superior nature; or, if they do not allow two natures, then, at least, as to his humbled state, and his state both before and after his humiliation: as Mark vii. 24. "And would have no man know it, but he *could not* be hid." This cannot mean, that the person who created the whole world, visible and invisible, &c., and by whom all things consist, and are governed, had not *power* to order things so, that he might be hid.

§ 52. It is observable, that Christ is frequently called *God* absolutely, Θεος and ὁ Θεος; by which name even the heathens themselves always understood the Supreme God. Dr. Cud-

worth, in his "Intellectual System," abundantly shows, that the heathens generally worshipped but one supreme, eternal, universal, uncreated Deity; but that their best philosophers maintained, that this Deity subsisted in three hypostases: though they had many created gods. And in page 627, he says, "It now appears, from what we have declared, that as to the ancient and genuine Platonists and Pythagoreans, none of their trinity of gods, or divine hypostases, were independent; so, neither, were they creature-gods, but uncreated, they being, all of them, not only eternal, and necessarily existent and immutable, but, also, universal, *i. e.* infinite and omnipotent causes, principles, and creators of the whole world. From whence it follows, that these Platonists could not justly be taxed with idolatry, in giving religious worship to each hypostasis of their trinity. And one grand design of Christianity being to abolish the Pagan idolatry, or creature-worship, it cannot justly be charged therewith, from that religious worship given to our Saviour Christ and the Holy Ghost, they being none of them, according to the true and orthodox Christianity, creatures, however the Arian hypothesis made them such. And this was, indeed, the grand reason why the ancient fathers so zealously opposed Arianism. We shall cite a remarkable passage out of Athanasius, fourth oration against the Arians, to this purpose, as follows:

"'Why, therefore, do not these Arians, holding this, reckon themselves amongst the Pagans, or Gentiles, since they do, in like manner, worship the creature, besides the Creator?—τη κτισει λατρευσι παρα τον κτισαντα.' Athanasius's meaning here, could not well be, that they worshipped the creature *more* than the Creator; forasmuch as the Arians constantly declared, that they gave less worship to the Son than to the Father.

"For though the Pagans worship one uncreated, and many created gods; but these Arians only one uncreated, and one created, to wit, the Son, or Word of God; yet will not this make any real difference betwixt them; because the Arians' one uncreated god, is one of those many Pagan gods; and these many gods of the Pagans, or Gentiles, have the same nature with this one, they being alike creatures."

§ 53. It is remarkable, that in so many places, both in the Old Testament and New, when Christ is spoken of, his glory and prerogatives represented, and the respect due to him urged, that the vanity of idols, in the same places, should be represented, and idolatry warned against. See Psalm xvi. 4. It is manifest, that it is the Messiah that there speaks. See, also, many prophecies of Isaiah, and other prophets. 1 John v. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 19—22.

"There is not the least intimation, where Christ is styled *God*, either in the texts themselves, or contexts, that this is to

be understood of his *office*, and not of his *person;* as is the case where magistrates are styled gods, where the very next words explain it, and tell us what is to be understood by it. And when Moses and angels are called gods, no one who attends to the whole discourse, could easily mistake the meaning, and not see, that this term *God*, was there used in an inferior and metaphorical sense." Letter to the Dedicator of Mr. Emlyn's Inquiry, &c., p. 7, 8.—Matt. xix. 17. "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."—"Mr. Emlyn affirms it to be evident, that Christ here distinguishes himself from God, and denies of himself what he affirms of God. But the truth of his interpretation, entirely depends upon the *opinion* which the young man had of Christ, who received this answer from him." Ibid. p. 17, 18.

§ 54. That Christ had divine omniscience, appears from his own words; Rev. ii. 23. "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the hearts and the reins." Now Solomon declares, 1 Kings viii. 39: "Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." And Jer. xvii. 10. God says, "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins." And Christ does not say, The Churches shall know that I search the reins and the heart; but that "I am HE," &c., which, if words have any force in them, yea, if the expression is not altogether unintelligible, implies, "I am He who is distinguished by this character; or, the Churches shall know that I am the God who searcheth," &c. Ibid. p. 43, 44.

§ 55. That the eternal Logos should be subordinate to the Father, though not inferior in nature; yea, that Christ, in his *office*, should be subject to the Father, and less than He, though in his higher nature not inferior, is not strange. It is proper, among mankind, that a son should be subordinate to his father, yea subject in many respects, though of the same human nature; yea, though in no respect inferior in any natural qualification. It is proper that Solomon should be under David his father, and appointed king by him, and receive charges and directions from him, though, even then, in his youth, probably not inferior to his father.

The disciples of Christ, or those that trusted in him, when here on earth, applied to him as trusting in his ability, not only to heal all diseases of the body, and to raise the dead; but as leaving their souls in his hands, and being able to heal the diseases of their minds; as being the Author and Fountain of virtue. So Luke xvii. 5. "The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." So the father of the demoniac, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

§ 56. It is a good argument for Christ's divinity, that he is to be Author of the resurrection. The atoms and particles in one little finger, are capable of so many removes, and such

dispersions, that I believe it would surpass any finite understanding at two or three thousand years' end, to tell what distinct particles of the universe belonged to it. It would require a vast strength and subtilty of mind, to trace but one atom so nicely, as to know that individual atom in the universe, after so long a time; after it had been a particle of air, water, oil, or animal spirit, &c. and had been transported with prodigious swiftness from place to place, back wards and forwards, millions of times, amongst innumerable others of the same kind. Especially, would it be exceeding difficult, so narrowly to watch two of such at once. If so, what would it be, to follow every atom in a man's body; yea, of all the bodies that ever have died, or shall die? And, at the same time, to have the mind exercised with full vigour upon innumerable other matters, that require an equal strength of understanding? and all this with such ease, that it shall be no labour to the mind?

§ 57. God would not have given us any person to be our Redeemer, unless he was of divine and absolutely supreme dignity and excellency, or was the Supreme God; lest we should be under temptation to pay him too great respect; lest, if he were not the Supreme God, we should be under temptation to pay him that respect which is due only to the Supreme, and which God, who is a jealous God, will by no means allow to be paid to an inferior being. Men are very liable to be tempted to rate those too highly, from whom they have received great benefits. They are prone to give them that respect and honour, that belongs to God only. Thus the Gentile world deified and adored such of their kings as did great things for them, and others from whom they received great benefits. So Cornelius was tempted to give too great respect to Peter, he being the person that God had marked out to be his teacher and guide in things pertaining to eternal salvation. So the apostle John could scarce avoid adoring the angel that showed him those visions: he fell down to worship him once and again. Though the first time he had been strictly warned against it; yet the temptation was so great, that he did it again: Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8. This being a temptation they were so liable to, was greatly disallowed of by God. When Cornelius fell down before Peter, he took him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." So, when the people at Lystra were about to offer divine worship to Paul and Barnabas, when they heard of it, they rent their clothes, and ran in among them crying out, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein;" Acts xiv. And when John was about to adore the angel, how strictly was he warned against it; "See thou do it not," says he.

"for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, that have the testimony of Jesus Christ: worship God." And God has always been so careful to guard against it, that he hid the body of Moses, that it might be no temptation to idolatry. But if any thing can be a temptation to give supreme respect and honour to one that is not the supreme being, this would be a temptation, *viz.* to have a person that is not the supreme being, to be our redeemer; to have such an one endure such great sufferings out of love to us, and thereby to deliver us from such extreme and eternal misery, and to purchase for us so great and eternal happiness. God, therefore, in wisdom, has appointed such a person to be our Redeemer, that is of absolutely supreme glory and excellency, that we may be in no danger of loving and adoring him too much: that we may prize him, exalt him, for the great things that he has done for us, as much as we will, nay so far as his love to us, his sufferings for us, and the benefits we receive by him, can tempt us to, without danger of exceeding. Christ has done as great things for us as ever the Father did. His mercy and love, have been as great and wonderful; and we receive as much benefit by them, as we do by the love and mercy of the Father. The Father never did greater things for us than to redeem us from hell, and bring us to eternal life. But if Christ had not been a person equal with the Father, and worthy of our equal respect, God would not have so ordered it, that the temptation to love and respect the Son, which results from favours that we have by kindness received, should be equal with the inducements we have to love and respect the Father.

§ 58. I shall offer some reasons against Dr. WATTS's notion of the pre-existence of Christ's Human Soul. If the pre-existing soul of Christ created the world, then, doubtless, he upholds and governs it. The same Son of God that did one, does the other. He created all things, and by him all things consist. And, if so, how was his dominion confined to the Jewish nation, before his incarnation, but extends to all nations since? Besides, there are many things ascribed in the Old Testament to the Son of God, in those very places which Dr. Watts, himself, supposes to speak of Him, that imply his government of the whole world, and all nations. The same person that is spoken of as King of Israel, is represented as the Governor of the world.

According to this scheme, the greatest of the works of the Son, in his created nature, implying the greatest exaltation, was His first work of all; *viz.* His creating all things, all worlds, all things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: and this before ever he had any trial at all of his obedience, &c. At least, this work seems much greater than judging the world at the last

day; which the Scripture often speaks of as one of the highest parts of his exaltation, which he has in reward for his obedience and sufferings: and, Dr. Watts, himself, supposes his honours, since his humiliation, to be much greater than before.

§ 59. On this scheme, it will follow, that the covenant of redemption was made with a person that was not *sui juris*, and not at liberty to act his own mere good pleasure, with respect to undertaking to die for sinners; but was obliged to comply, on the first intimation that it would be well-pleasing to God, and a thing that he chose.

§ 60. According to that scheme, the man Christ Jesus was not properly the son of a virgin, and so the son of man. To be the son of a woman, is to receive being in both soul and body, in consequence of a conception in her womb. The soul is the principal part of the man; and sonship implies derivation of the soul as well as the body, by conception. Though the soul is no part of the mother, and be immediately given by God, yet that hinders not its being derived by conception; it being consequent on it, according to a law of nature. It is agreeable to a law of nature, that where a perfect human body is conceived in the womb of a woman, and properly nourished and increased, a human soul should come into being: and conception may as properly be the cause whence it is derived, as many other natural effects are derived from natural causes, or antecedents. For it is the power of God which produces these effects, though it be according to an established law. The soul being so much the principal part of man, a derivation of the soul by conception, is the chief thing implied in a man's being the son of a woman.

According to what seems to be Dr. Watts's scheme, the Son of God is no distinct divine person from the Father. So far as He is a divine person, He is the same person with the Father. So that, in the covenant of redemption, the Father covenants with himself, and He takes satisfaction of himself, &c. Unless you will say, that one nature covenanted with the other, the two natures in the same person covenanted together, and one nature in the same person, took satisfaction of the other nature in the same person. But how does this confound our minds instead of helping our ideas, or making them more easy and intelligible!

§ 61. The Son of God, as a distinct person, was from eternity. It is said, Mic. v. 2. "His goings forth were of old, from everlasting." So Prov. viii. 23. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." So he is called, Isaiah ix. 6. "The everlasting Father." I know of no expressions used in Scripture, more strong, to signify the eternity of the Father himself.

Dr. Watts supposes the world to be made by the pre-existent soul of Christ; and thinks it may properly be so said, though the knowledge and power of this pre-existent soul could not extend to the most minute parts, every atom, &c.—But it is evidently the design of the Scripture to assure us, that Christ made all things whatever, in the absolute universality. John i. 33. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Col. i. 16, 17. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Now, if we suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, it will follow, that, let His wisdom and power be as great as they will, if finite, but a few of those individual things that are made, were the effects of his power and wisdom: yea, that the number of the things that were made by Him, are so few, that they bear no proportion to others, that did not immediately fall under His notice; or that of the things that are made, there are ten thousand times, yea, infinitely more, not made by Him, than are made by Him:—And so, but infinitely few of their circumstances are ordered by His wisdom.

It is said, Heb. ii. 8. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him; He left nothing that is not put under Him." Here, it is represented, that God, the Father, has put every individual thing under the power and government of another person, distinct from Himself. But this cannot be true of the human soul of Christ, as it must be according to Dr. Watts's scheme, let the powers of that be never so great, if they are not infinite. For things and circumstances, and dependencies and consequences of things in the world, are infinite in number; and, therefore, a finite understanding and power, cannot extend to them: yea, it can extend to but an infinitely small part of the whole number of individuals, and their circumstances and consequences. Indeed, in order to the disposal of a few things, in their motions and successive changes, to a certain precise issue, there is need of infinite exactness, and so need of infinite power and wisdom.

§ 62. The work of creation, and so the work of upholding all things in being, can, in no sense, be properly said to be the work of any *created* nature. If the created nature gives forth the word, as Joshua did, when he said, "Sun, stand thou still;" yet it is not that created nature that does it: That Being that depends himself on creating power, does not properly do any thing towards creation, as Joshua did nothing towards stopping the sun in his course. So that it cannot be true in Dr. Watts's scheme, that that Son of God, who is a distinct person from

God the Father, did at all, in any manner of propriety, *create* the world, nor does he uphold it, or govern it. Nor can those things that Christ often says of himself be true: as "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—"Whatsoever the Father doeth, these doeth the Son likewise." John v. 17, 19; it being very evident, that the works of creating and upholding and governing the world, are ascribed to the Son, as a distinct person from the Father.

§ 63. Not only is the word *Elohim* in the plural number, but it is joined to a verb of the plural number, in Gen. xx. 13. *When God caused me to wander from my Father's house.* The word *hightnu*, *caused to wander*, is in the plural number. This is agreeable to the use of plural verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, in Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7. See other instances in Gen. xxxv. 7; Exodus xxxii. 2, 4; compared with Neh. ix. 18; Isaiah xvi. 6.

The very frequent joining of the word *Elohim*, a word in the plural number, with the word *Jehovah*, a word in the singular number, (as may be seen in places referred to in the English concordance, under the words, Lord God, Lord his God, Lord my God, Lord our God, Lord their God, Lord thy God, Lord your God,) seems to be a significant indication of the union of several divine persons in one essence. The word *Jehovah*, signifies as much as the word *Essence*, and is the proper name of God with regard to his self-existent, eternal, all-sufficient, perfect, and immutable Essence. Moses seems to have regard to something remarkable in thus calling *Elohim*, the plural, so often by the singular name, *Jehovah;* especially in that remark which he makes for the special observation of God's people Israel, in Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord." In the original, it is *Jehovah, Elohenu Jehovah Ehadh;* the more proper translation of which is, *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.* The verb *is*, is understood, and properly inserted between *Jehovah Elohenu* and *Jehovah Ehadh*, thus, *Jehovah Elohenu* is *Jehovah Ehadh;* which, if most literally translated, is thus, *Jehovah Our Divine Persons, is one Jehovah:* as though Moses, in this remark, had a particular reference to the word *Elohim* being in the plural number, and would guard the people against imagining from thence, that there was a plurality of Essences or Beings, among whom they were to divide their affections and respect.

A farther confirmation that the name *Elohim*, when used as the name of the True God, signifies some plurality, is, that this same name is commonly, all over the Hebrew Bible, used to signify the gods of the Heathens, when many gods are spoken of. See those places in the Hebrew Bible, which are referred to in the English concordance, under the word *Gods.* In Exodus xx. 2, 3, when it is said in the third verse, "Thou

shalt have no other GODS before Me;" the word is the same as in the foregoing verse, where it is said, "I am the Lord thy GOD, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It is *Elohim* in both verses: I am the Jehovah, thy *Elohim:* Thou shalt have no other *Elohim.* Yet the latter *Elohim* is joined with an adjective of the plural number; which seems naturally to lead the children of Israel, to whom God spake these words, to suppose a plurality in the *Elohim* which brought them out of Egypt, implied in the name *Jehovah.* Psalm lviii. 11. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; *Elohim Shophetim:*" Which literally is, *Elohim*, judges, (in the plural number.) See the evident distinction made between Jehovah *sending*, and Jehovah *sent* to the people, and dwelling in the midst of them, in Zech. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11. and iv. 8, 9, 11. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the glory hath He *sent* me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye." "For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me." "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know, that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto thee."—"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto you." "Then, answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?" Joshua xxiv. 19. "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is an Holy God, Elohim Kedhoshim." *He is the Holy Gods.* Not only is the word *Elohim* properly plural, the very same that is used, verse 15, the Gods which your fathers served, &c.; but the adjective *Holy*, is plural. A plural substantive and adjective are used here concerning the True God, just in the same manner as in 1 Sam. iv. 8. "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods?" And in Dan. iv. 8. "In whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods." So verse 9, 18, and chap. v. 11. That the plural number should thus be used with the epithet *Holy*, agrees well with the doxology of the angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," &c.—Isaiah vi. and Rev. vi.

§ 64. It is an argument, that the Jews of old understood that there were several persons in the Godhead, and, particularly, that when the cherubim, in the 6th of Isaiah, cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," they had respect to three persons: That the seventy interpreters in several places, where the Holy

One of Israel is spoken of, use the plural number; as in Isaiah xli. 16. "Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel;" in the LXX. it is, ευφρανθησῃ εν τοις αγιοις Ισραηλ. Isaiah lx. 14. "The Zion of the Holy One of Israel;" it is, σιων αγιων Ισραηλ. So Jer. li. 5. "Filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel;" απω των αγιων Ισραηλ.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS*

ON

IMPORTANT DOCTRINES.

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT, A FUTURE STATE, AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

SECTION I.

THE Creator of the world, is doubtless also the Governor of it. He that had power to give being to the world, and set all the parts of it in order, has doubtless power to dispose of the world, to continue the order he has constituted, or to alter it. He that first gave the laws of nature, must have all nature in his hands: So that it is evident God has the world in his hands, to dispose of as he pleases. And, as God is able, so he is inclined, to govern the world. For, as he is an intelligent being, he had some end in what he did, otherwise he did not act as a voluntary agent in making the world. That being never acts voluntarily, that has no end in what he does, and aims at nothing at all in it. Neither God nor man is properly said to make any thing that necessarily or accidentally proceeds from them, but that only which is voluntarily produced. Besides, we see in the particular parts of the world, that God had a particular end in their formation. They are fitted for such an end. By which it appears, that the Creator did act as a voluntary agent, proposing final causes in the work of creation: And he that made the particular parts for certain ends, doubtless made

* The greatest part of these REMARKS are original, and may be considered as a second volume of PRESIDENT EDWARDS's Miscellaneous Observations; but, as they relate to Subjects entirely different, make by themselves a Book.

the whole for a certain end. And if God made the world for some end, doubtless he will choose to have this world disposed of to answer that end. For his proposing the end, supposes, that he chooses it should be obtained. Therefore, it follows, that God will choose to take care that the world be disposed of to the obtaining of his own ends, which is the same thing as his choosing to have the government of the world. And it is manifest, in fact, that God is not careless how the affairs and concerns of the world he has made proceed, because he was not careless of this matter in the creation itself; as it is apparent, by the manner and order in which things were created, that God in creating, took care of the future progress and state of things in the world. This being established, I now proceed to show, that it must be, that God maintains a moral government over the world of mankind.

§ 2. If it be certain that God is concerned and does take care how things proceed in the state of the world he has made, then he will be especially concerned how things proceed in the state of the world of mankind. Mankind are the principal part of the visible creation. They have understanding, are voluntary agents, and can produce works of their own will, design, and contrivance, as God does. And the Creator looks upon them as the principal part of his visible creation, as is manifest, because he hath set them at the head of his creation. The world is evidently made to be an habitation for man, and all things about him are subordinated to his use. Now, if God be careful how the world that he has made be regulated, that his end may be answered, and that it may not be in vain, he will be especially careful of this concerning the principal part of it, and in the same proportion that it is principal or superior in his own account to the rest. The more God has respect to any part of the world he has made, the more concerned he will be about the state of that part. But, it is manifest by the creation itself, that God has more respect or regard to man, than to any other part of the visible creation; because he has evidently made and fitted other parts to man's use. And therefore God will not leave the world of mankind to themselves, without taking any care to govern and order their state. It is evident, by the manner in which God has formed and constituted other things, that he has respect to beauty, good order and regulation, proportion and harmony; so, in the system of the world, in the seasons of the year, in the formation of plants, and of the various parts of the human body. Surely, therefore, he will not leave the principal part of the creation, about the state of which he is evidently, in fact, chiefly concerned, without making any proper provision for its being in any other than a state of deformity, discord, and the most hateful and dreadful confusion.

§ 3. By what has been already said, God is most concerned about the state and government of that which is highest in his creation, and which he values most; and so he is principally concerned about the ordering the state of mankind, which is a part of the creation that he has made superior, and that he values most: and therefore, in like manner, it follows, that he is principally concerned about the regulation of that which he values most in man, *viz.* what appertains to his intelligence and voluntary acts. If there be any thing in the principal part of the creation, that the Creator values more than other parts, it must be that wherein it is above them, or, at least, something wherein it differs from them. But the only thing wherein men differ from the inferior creation, is intelligent perception and action. This is that in which the Creator has made man to differ from the rest of the creation, and by which he has set him over it, and by which he governs the inferior creatures, and uses them for himself; and therefore it must needs be, that the Creator should be chiefly concerned, that the state of mankind should be regulated according to his will, with respect to what appertains to him as an intelligent, voluntary creature. Hence it must be, that God does take care, that a good moral government should be maintained over man; that his intelligent, voluntary acts, should be all subject to rules; and that with respect to them all, he should be the subject of judicial proceeding. For unless this be, there is no care taken, that the state of mankind with respect to their intelligent voluntary acts, should be regulated at all; but all things will be remedilessly in the utmost deformity, confusion and ruin. The world of mankind, instead of being superior, will be the worse, and more hateful, and the more vile and miserable, for having the faculties of reason and will; and this highest part of the creation will be the lowest, and infinitely the most confused, deformed and detestable, without any provision for rectifying its evils. And the God of order, peace, and harmony, that constituted the inferior parts of the world, which he has subjected to man, and made subservient to him, in such decency, beauty, and harmony, will appear to have left this chief part of his work, and the end of all the rest, to the reign of everlasting discord, confusion, and ruin; contradicting and conflicting with its own nature and faculties; having reason, and yet acting in all things contradictory to it; being men, but yet beasts; setting sense above reason; improving reason only as a weapon of mischief and destruction of God's workmanship.

§ 4. I would again argue, that God must maintain a moral government over mankind, thus:—It is evident, that it was agreeable to the Creator's design, that there should be *some* moral government maintained amongst men; because, without

any, either in nations, provinces, towns, or families, and also without any divine government over the whole, the world of mankind could not subsist, but would destroy itself. Men would be not only much more destructive to each other, than any kind of animals are to their own species, but a thousand times more than any kind of beasts are to those of any other species. Therefore, the nature that God has given all mankind, and the circumstances in which he has placed them, lead all, in all ages throughout the habitable world, into moral government. And the Creator doubtless intended this for the preservation of this highest species of creatures, otherwise he has made much less provision for the defence and preservation of this species, than of any other. There is no kind of creature that he has left without proper means for its own preservation. But unless man's own reason, to be improved in moral rule and order, be the means he has provided for the preservation of man, he has provided him with no means at all. Therefore, it is doubtless the original design of the Creator, that there should be moral subordination amongst men, and that he designed there should be heads, princes, or governors, to whom honour, subjection and obedience should be paid. Now, this strongly argues, that the Creator himself will maintain a moral government over the whole. For, without this, the preservation of the species is but very imperfectly provided for. If men have nothing but human government to be a restraint upon their lusts, and have no rule or judgment of an universal omniscient governor to be a restraint upon their consciences, still they are left in a most woful condition, and the preservation and common benefit of the species, according to its necessities, and the exigencies of its place, nature and circumstances in the creation, is in nowise provided for, as the preservation and necessities of other species are.

Now, it is reasonable to think, that the Creator would so constitute the circumstances of mankind, that some particular persons, that have only a little image and shadow of his greatness and power over men, should exercise it in giving forth edicts and executing judgment; and that he who is above all and the original of all, should exercise no power in this way himself, when mankind stand in so much more need of such an exercise of his power, than of the power of human governors?—He has infinitely the greatest right to exercise the power of a moral governor, if he pleases. His relation to man as his Creator, most naturally leads to it. He is infinitely the most worthy of that respect, honour and subjection, that is due to a moral governor. He has infinitely the best qualifications of a governor, being infinitely wise, powerful and holy, and his government will be infinitely the most effectual to answer the ends of government.

§ 5. It is manifest, that the Creator of the world, in constituting human moral governments among men, has, in that constitution, had great respect to those qualifications, that relation, and those rights and obligations, in those whom he has appointed to be rulers, and in putting others under their moral government, which he has in himself in a vastly more eminent degree. As, particularly, in the government of parents over their children, which of all other kinds of human moral government is most evidently founded in nature, and which the preservation of the species doth most immediately require. Here God hath set those to be moral rulers, who are the wiser and stronger, and has appointed those to be in subjection, who are less knowing, and weaker, and have received being from their rulers, and are dependent, preserved and maintained. Would not he therefore maintain moral government himself over mankind, who is their universal father, their universal preserver, who maintains all, and provides all with food and raiment, and all the necessaries and enjoyments of life, and is infinitely wiser and stronger than they? Would not he maintain a moral government over men, who need his government, as children need the government of their parents, and who are no more fit to be left to themselves in the world without his rules, directions, authority, promises, threatenings, and judgment, than children are fit to be left to themselves in a house?

§ 6. As man is made capable of knowing his Creator, so he is capable of a high esteem of his perfections, his power, wisdom and goodness. He is capable of a proper esteem of God for his wise, excellent, and wonderful works, which he beholds; and for their admirable contrivance, which appears in so excellently ordering all things; and of gratitude to him for all the goodness of which he himself is the subject; or, on the contrary, of slighting and despising him, and hating him, finding fault with his works, reproaching him for them, slighting all his goodness which he receives from him; yea, hating him for ordering things in his providence to him as he has done, and cursing and blaspheming him for it.

Now, it is unreasonable to suppose, that God should be an indifferent spectator of those things in his creature made in his own image, and made superior to all other creatures; and in a creature that he values above all the rest of the creation. It cannot be equally agreeable to him, whether man gives him proper esteem, love, honour, and gratitude; or, on the contrary, unreasonably despises, hates, and curses him. And if he be not an indifferent spectator of these things, then he will not act as a perfectly indifferent spectator, and wholly let men alone, and order things in no respect differently for those ends one way or other. But so it must be, if God maintains no moral government over mankind.

§ 7. As man is made capable of knowing his Creator, so he is capable of knowing his will in many things, *i. e.* he is capable of knowing his ends in this and the other works which he beholds. For it is this way principally that he comes to know there is a God, even by seeing the final causes of things; by seeing that such and such things are plainly designed and contrived for such and such ends; and therefore he is capable of either complying with the will of his Creator, or opposing it. He is capable of falling in with God's ends, and what he sees his Creator aim at, and co-operating with him, or of setting himself against the Creator's designs. It is manifest, that it is the Creator's design, that parents should nourish their children, and that children should be subject to their parents. If a man therefore should murder his children, or if children should rise up and murder their parents, they would oppose the Creator's aims. So if men use the several bodily organs to quite contrary purposes to those for which they were given, and if they use the faculties of their own minds to ends quite contrary to those for which they were fitted, (for doubtless they were given and fitted for some end or other,) he may perversely use his dominion over the creatures against the ends to which they were given. For, however far we may suppose man may be from being capable of properly frustrating his Creator, yet he is capable of showing that his will is contrary to his Creator's ends. He may oppose his Creator in his *will;* he may dislike God's ends, and seek others. Now, the Creator cannot be an indifferent spectator of this; for it is a contradiction to suppose, that opposition to his will and aims should be as agreeable to him in itself, as complying with his will. And if he is not an indifferent spectator, then he will not act as such, and so he must maintain a moral government over mankind.

§ 8. This argument is peculiarly strong, as it respects man's being capable of falling in with, or opposing God's ends in his own creation, and his endowing him with faculties above the rest of the world. It is exceeding manifest concerning mankind, that God must have made them for some end; not only as it is evident that God must have made the world in general for some end, and as man is an intelligent voluntary agent; but as it is especially manifest *from fact*, that God has made mankind for some special end. For, it is apparent, in fact, that God has made the inferior parts of the world for some end, and that the special end he made them for is to subserve the benefit of mankind. Therefore, above all, may it be argued, that God has made mankind for some end. If an artificer accomplishes some great piece of workmanship, very complicated, and with a vast variety of parts, but the whole is so contrived and connected together, that there is some particular part which all the other parts are to subserve, we should well conclude that the

workman had some special design to serve by that part, and that his peculiar aim in the whole, was what he intended should be obtained by that part. Now, man, the principal part of the creation, is capable of knowing his Creator, and is capable of discerning God's ends in the formation of other things; therefore, doubtless, since God discovers to him the ends for which he has made other things, it would be very strange, if he should not let him know the end for which he *himself* is made, or for which he had such distinguishing faculties given him, whereby he is set above other parts of the creation. Therefore, in the use of his own faculties, he must either fall in with the known design of the Creator in giving them, or thwart it. He must either co-operate with his Creator, as complying with the end of his own being, or wittingly set himself as his enemy. Of this the Creator cannot be an indifferent spectator; and therefore, by what was said before, must maintain moral government over mankind.

§ 9. It may be argued, that God maintains a moral government over the world of mankind, from this, that the special end of the being of man is something wherein he has to do with his Creator. The special end of the brute creation, is something wherein they are concerned with men. But man's special end is some improvement or use of his faculties towards God. For the *special* end for which God made mankind, is something very diverse and very superior to those ends for which he made any part of the inferior creation; because God has made man very different from them. But man's special end does not respect any other parts of the visible creation. All these are below him, and all, as we observed before, are made for him, to be subservient to his use. Their special end respects him; but his special end does not respect them. For, this is unreasonable in itself: if they are, in their formation and end subordinated to him, and subjected to him, then the Maker sets a greater value on him than them, and, therefore, he has not made him for them. For that would be to suppose them most valuable in the eyes of their Maker. And, it is manifest, in fact, that the being of mankind does not subserve the benefit of the inferior creatures, any farther than is just necessary to turn them to his own use, and spend them in it.

To this we may add, that the happiness of the greater part of mankind, in their worldly enjoyments, is not great enough, or durable enough, to prove that the end of all things in the whole visible universe, is only that happiness. Therefore, nothing else remains, no other supposition is possible, but that man's special end is something wherein he has immediately to do with his Creator.

§ 10. If God has made men above other creatures, with capacities superior to them, for some special end, for which

other creatures are not made, that special end must be something peculiar to them, for which they are capacitated and fitted by those superior faculties. Now, the greatest thing that men are capacitated for, by their faculties, more than the beasts, is, that they are capable of having intercourse with their Creator, as intelligent and voluntary agents. They are capable of knowing, esteeming, and loving him, and capable of receiving instructions and commands from him, and capable of obeying and serving him, if he be pleased to give commands, and make a revelation of his mind. Surely, this is not without some end. He that has done nothing in the inferior world in vain, has not given man this capacity in vain. The sun has not its light given it without a final cause; and shall we suppose, that mankind has this light of the knowledge of their Creator, without a final cause?

Thus, it is evident, that the special end for which God has made man, is something wherein he has intercourse with his Creator, as an intelligent, voluntary agent. Hence, the consequence is certain, that mankind are subject to God's moral government. For, there can be no such thing maintained, as a communication between God and man, as between intelligent, voluntary agents, without moral government. For, in maintaining communication, or converse, one must yield to the other, must comply with the other; there must be union of wills; one must be clothed with authority, the other with submission. If God has made man to converse with himself, he is not indifferent how he is conversed with. One manner of behaviour must be agreeable to his will, and another not; and, therefore, God cannot act as indifferent in this matter. He cannot let man alone, to behave toward him just as he pleases; therefore, there must be moral government. God cannot be indifferent, whether he is respected and honoured, or is contemned and hated.

§ 11. Now as the consequence of the whole, I would infer two things:

1. A future state of rewards and punishments. For, unless there be such a state, it will certainly follow, that God, in fact, maintains no moral government over the world of mankind. For, otherwise, it is apparent, that there is no such thing as rewarding or punishing mankind, according to any visible rule, or indeed, according to any order or method whatsoever. Without this, there may be desires manifested, but there can be no proper laws established, and no authority maintained. Nothing is more manifest, than that in this world there is no such thing as a regular, equal disposing of rewards and punishments of men according to their moral estate. There is nothing in God's disposals toward men in this world, to make his distributive justice and judicial equity visible, but all

things are in the greatest confusion. Often the wicked prosper, and are not in trouble as other men.—They become mighty in power; yea, it has commonly been so in all ages, that they have been uppermost in the world. They have the ascendant over the righteous. They are mounted on thrones; while the righteous remain in cottages. And, in this world, the cause of the just is not vindicated.—Many wicked men have the righteous in their power, and trample them under foot, and become their cruel persecutors: And the righteous are oppressed, and suffer all manner of injuries and cruelties; while the wicked live, and reign in great glory and prosperity.

2. What has been said does invincibly argue a divine revelation. Because, if God maintains a moral government over mankind, then there must be rewards and punishments. But these sanctions must be declared: For instance, the punishments which enforce God's laws must be made known. To suppose that God keeps up an equal, perfect moral government over the world, and yet leaves men wholly at a loss about the nature, manner, degree, time, place, and continuance of their punishment, or leaves it wholly to their guesses, or for them to argue it out from the nature of things, as well as they can, and every one to make his judgment according as his notions shall guide him, is a very unreasonable supposition. If moral government be maintained, the order and method of government must be visible; otherwise it looses the nature of moral government. There may be a powerful disposal, as inanimate, unintelligible things are the subjects of God's government, in a visible and established order; but no *moral* government. The order of government serves to maintain authority, and to influence and rule the subject morally, no farther than it is visible. The notion of a moral government, without a revelation or declaration of the mind of the head by his word, or some voluntary sign or signification, in the whole of it is absurd. How absurd is it to suppose, that there should be converse and moral government maintained between the head and subjects, when both are intelligent, voluntary agents, without a voluntary communication of minds and expressions, thoughts and inclinations, between the head and the members of the society!

§ 12 It need not be looked upon as any objection to men's remaining in being after the death of their bodies, that the beasts that are made for man cease to be when they die. For it is manifest, in fact, that man is the end of the rest of the creatures in this lower world. This world, with all its parts inanimate, vegetative, and sensitive, was made for an habitation for man during his present state: And if man be the end of the rest of the creatures, for which the rest were made, and to whose use they are subordinated, then man is *instar*

omnium. The *end* of all is equivalent to the whole. Therefore there is no need of any thing else to be preserved; nothing is lost; no part is in vain. If the end of all be preserved, all is preserved: because he is all, the rest is only for his occasional use. The beasts subserve man's use in the present state; and then, though they cease, yet their end is obtained, and their good, which is their end, remains still in man. Though the tent that was set up for man to sojourn in during his state of probation, ceases when that occasion is over, surely that is no argument that the inhabitant ceases too.

And that the beasts are made for man, affords a good positive argument for a future state of man's existence. For that all other creatures in this lower world are made for man, and that he himself should be made for no more than they, *viz.* a short continuance in this world to enjoy the good things of it, is unreasonable.

§ 13. The natural world, which is in such continual labour, as is described in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes, constantly going round in such revolutions, will doubtless come to an end! These revolutions are not for nothing. There is some great event and issue of things, some grand period aimed at. Does God make the world restless, to move and revolve in all its parts, to make no progress? To labour with motions so mighty and vast, only to come to the same place again? Some great end is nearer to an accomplishment, after a thousand revolutions are finished, than when there was only one finished. The waters of the sea are not so restless, continually to ascend into the heavens, and then descend on the earth, and then return to the sea again, only that things may be as they were before. One generation of men does not come, another go, and so continually from age to age, only that at last there may be what there was at first, *viz.* mankind upon earth. The wheels of God's chariot, after they have gone round a thousand times, do not remain just in the same place that they were in at first, without having carried the chariot nearer to a journey's end.

§ 14. This is a confirmation of a future state. For, if these revolutions have not something in another state that is to succeed this, then they are in vain. If any thing of this world is to remain, after its revolutions are at an end, doubtless it will be that part which is the head of all the rest; or that creature for which all the rest is made; and that is man. For, if he wholly ceases, and is extinct, it is as if the whole were totally extinct: because he is the end of all. He is that creature, to serve whom the labours and revolutions of this world are, and whom they affect; and therefore, if he does not remain after the revolutions have ceased, then no end is obtained by all these

revolutions: because nothing abides as the fruit of them after they are finished. But all comes to no more than just what was before this world itself began, *viz.* an universal non-existence; all is extinct; all is as if the world had never been; and therefore all has been in vain; for nothing remains as the fruit. He that is carried in the chariot, does not remain after he is brought with so much labour and vast ado to the end of his journey; but ceases to be, as the chariot itself does.

§ 15. This confirms the divinity of the Christian revelation; which gives this account of things, that this world is to come to an end; it is to be dissolved; that the revolutions of the world have an appointed period; and that man, the end of this lower world, is to remain in being afterward; and gives a most rational account of the great period, design and issue of all things, worthy of the infinite wisdom and majesty of God.

§ 16. Some part of the world, *viz.* that which is the highest, the head, and the end of the rest, must be of eternal duration, even the intelligent, reasonable creatures. For, if these creatures, the head and end of all the rest of the creation, come to an end, and be annihilated, it is the same thing as if the *whole* were annihilated. And if the world be of a temporary duration, and then drops into nothing, it is in vain, *i. e.* no end is obtained worthy of God. There is nobody but what will own, that if God had created the world, and then it had dropt into nothing the next minute, it would have been in vain; no end could be obtained worthy of God. And the only reason is, that the end would have been so small, by reason of the short continuance of the good obtained by it. And so it is still infinitely little, if it stand a million of ages, and then drops into nothing. That is as a moment in the sight of God. It is, in comparison of him, absolutely equivalent to nothing, and therefore an end not worthy of him. No end is worthy of an infinite God, but an infinite end; and therefore the good obtained must be of infinite duration. If it be not so, who shall fix the bounds? Who shall say a million of years is long enough? And if it be, who shall say a good of a thousand years' continuance does not become the wisdom of God? And if it does, how can we say but that a good of still shorter continuance would not answer the ends of wisdom? If it would, who can say that the sovereignty of God shall not fix on a good of a minute's continuance as sufficient: which is as great in comparison with him as a million of years? The only reason why a good of a minute's continuance is not great enough to become the Creator of the world, is, that it is a good so little, when compared with him. And the same reason stands in equal force against a good of any limited duration whatsoever.

§ 17. It is often declared in the Old Testament, that God will bring every work into judgment; that there is verily a God

that judgeth in the earth; that his eyes are on the way of man; that he considers all his goings: That the sins of the wicked, and the good deeds of the righteous, are exactly observed, and written in a book of remembrance, and none of them forgotten; that they are sealed, and laid up among God's treasures; and that he will render to every man according to his works: That the Judge of all the earth will do right; and that therefore God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked: That as to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings; that as to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him; that it is impossible it should be otherwise; that there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves from God the Judge; that God cannot forget his people; that a woman may sooner forget her sucking child; that God has graven them on the palms of his hands; that God beholds and takes notice of all their afflictions, and pities them, as a father pitieth his children; but that he is the enemy of wicked men; that their sins shall find them out; that though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished; that the way of righteousness is a certain way to happiness, and the way of sin a sure way to misery. Solomon himself is more abundant than all other penmen of the old Testament, in observing the difference between the righteous and the wicked in this respect, the greatness and the certainty of that difference.* And in Ecclesiastes xii. 13, 14. Solomon declares, "That to fear God and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man: because God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." And chap. v. 8. "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they." Chap. viii. 11. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." And therefore, there is some other time, beside the time of this life, for executing the sentence which he observes will so surely be executed. In Prov. x. 7. Solomon says, "the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot." And of this memory or good name of the just, he says, (Eccles. vii. 1.) that "it is better than precious ointment, (meaning the precious ointment they were wont to anoint the children of great and rich men with, when first born;)

* See Prov. i. 31, 32; and ii. 11, 21, 22; and iii. 2, 4, 8, 13—18, 21—26, 32, 35; iv. 5—13, 22; viii. 17—21, 35, 36; ix. 5, 6, 11, 12; x. 16, 17, 27, 28, 29; xi. 7, 8, 18, 19, 21, 30, 31; xii. 2, 3, 14, 21, 28; xiii. 9, 13, 14, 15, 21; xiv. 19, 26, 27; xv. 3, 6, 24; xvi. 3—7; xix. 23; xxi. 15, 16, 18, 21; xxii. 4, 8; xxiii. 17, 18; xxiv. 1—5, 12, 15, 16, 19—22; xxviii. 10, 13, 14, 18; xxix. 6; and in many other places in the book of Proverbs.

and that, upon this account, the day of a godly man's death (followed with a good name and so blessed a memory) is better than the day of one's birth."

§ 18. If God has perfectly forgiven all the sins of the righteous, and they are so high in his favour; and if the great evidence of this favour be the durableness of the benefits that are the fruits of it, and the chief fruit of it is life; then it is at least to be expected, that they will escape that mortality which is such a remarkable disgrace to those that have the human nature, and so wonderful to behold in those whom the *Most High* has made to differ so much from the beasts in capacity, dignity, end and design. We might surely expect, that these high favourites should, with regard to life and durableness of happiness, not be mere beasts, and have no pre-eminence above them; and that they should not be like the grass, and the flower of the field, which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, but in the evening is cut down and withered; that all their happiness, and all the benefits of God's favour, should not be like a shadow, like a dream, like a tale that is told; that it should not be as a span, and should not pass away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey; to which things, the life of man is compared in scripture.

The things of this world are spoken of as having no profit, or value, because they are not lasting, but must be left at death, and, therefore, are mere vanity, and not worthy that any man should set his heart on them; Psalm xlix. 6. to the end; Prov. xxiii. 4, 5; Prov. xi. 7; Ecclesiastes ii. 15, 16, 17; chap. iii. ten first verses; verse 19; chap. v. 14, 15, 16. But the rewards of righteousness are abundantly represented as exceedingly valuable and worthy that men should set their hearts upon them, because they are lasting; Prov. iii. 16; viii. 18; and x. 25, 27; Isaiah lv. 3; Psalm i. 3. to the end; Isaiah xvii. 7, 8; and innumerable other places. How can these things consist one with another, unless there be a future state?

It is spoken of as a remarkable thing, and what one would not expect, that good men should die as wicked men do, as it seems to be, by good men's dying a temporal death as wicked men do; Eccles. ii. 16; chap. ix. 3, 4, 5. And, therefore, it may be argued, that it does but *seem* to be so; but that in reality it shall not be so, inasmuch as, though good men die a temporal death as wicked men do, yet, as to their happiness, they die not, but live for ever in a future state. It is an evidence of a future state, that, in the Old Testament, so many promises are made to the godly, of things that shall be after they are dead, which shall be testimonies of God's great favour to them, and blessed rewards of his favour; so many promises concerning their name, and concerning their posterity, and the future church of God in the world; and yet that we are

so much taught in the Old Testament, that men are never the better for what comes to pass after they are dead, concerning these things, (*i. e.* if we look only at the present life, without taking any other state of existence into consideration,) Job xiv. 21; Eccles. i. ii. iii. 22; and ix. 5, 6. Yea, the wise man says expressly, that the dead have no more a reward, (Eccles. ix. 5.) *i. e.* in any thing in this world.—That man shall die as a beast, seems to be spoken of, Eccles. iii. 16. to the end; as a vanity, an evil, a kind of mischief and confusion, that appears in the world. Therefore, this is an argument, that God, the wise orderer of all things, who brings order out of confusion, will rectify this disorder by appointing a future state.

§ 19. It is an argument that the Old Testament affords for the proof of a future life and immortality, that we are there taught, that mortality is brought in by sin, and comes as a punishment of sin. Therefore, it is natural to suppose, that when complete forgiveness is promised, and perfect restoration to favour, and deliverance from death, and the bestowment of life, as the fruit of this favour, eternal life and immortality is intended. The better men are, the more terrible would it make death, if there were no future state. For the better they are, the more they love God. Good men have found the fountain of good. Those men who have a high degree of love to God, greatly delight in God. They have experience of a much better happiness in life than others; and, therefore, it must be more dreadful for them to have their beings eternally extinct by death. Hence, we may strongly argue a future state: for, it is not to be supposed, that God would make man such a creature as to be capable of looking forward beyond death, and capable of knowing and loving him, and delighting in him as the fountain of all good, which will necessarily increase in him a dread of annihilation, and an eager desire of immortality; and yet so order it, that such desire should be disappointed; so that his loving his Creator, should, in some sense, make him the more miserable.

§ 20. Nothing is more manifest, than that it is absolutely necessary, in order to a man's being thoroughly, universally, and steadfastly virtuous, that his mind and heart should be thoroughly weaned from this world; which is a great evidence, that God intends another world for virtuous men. He surely would not require them, in their thoughts, affections, and expectations, wholly to relinquish this world, if it were all the world they were to expect: if he had made them for this world wholly and only, and had created the world for them, to be their only country and home, all the resting place ever designed for them.—If all the creatures God has made are to come to an end, and the world itself is to come to an end, and so to be as though it had never been, then it will be with all God's

glorious and magnificent works, agreeably to what is said of the temporal prosperity of the wicked, Job xx. 6, 7, 8. "Though its excellency be never so great, yet it shall perish for ever; it shall all fly away as a dream; it shall be chased away as a vision of the night."- It shall vanish totally, and absolutely be as though it had not been.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE ENDLESS PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO DIE IMPENITENT.

§ 1. The word *everlasting* is used in the very sentence of the Judge at the last day, whom we cannot suppose to use rhetorical tropes and figures. The wicked that are finally impenitent, are represented as wholly cast away, lost, made no account of, &c.; which is quite inconsistent with their punishment being medicinal, and for their good and purification, and to fit them for final and eternal happiness.—Eternal punishment is not eternal annihilation. Surely they will not be raised to life at the last day, only to be annihilated. "The words used to signify the duration of the punishment of the wicked, do, in their etymology, truly signify a proper eternity; and if they are sometimes used in a less strict sense, when the nature of the thing requires it, yet that can never pass as any reason why they are not to be understood absolutely, when the subject is capable of it. They are terms the most expressive of an endless duration, of any that can be used or imagined. And they always signify so far positively endless, as to be express against any other period or conclusion, than what arises from the nature of the thing. They are never used in Scripture in any other limited sense, than to exclude all positive abolition, or annihilation, or conclusion, other than what the natural intent or constitution of the subject spoken of must necessarily admit. The word αιωνιος, which is the word generally used by the sacred writers, is, we know, derived from the adverb αει, which signifies for ever, and cannot without force be used in any lower sense. And particularly, this is the word by which the eternal and immutable attributes of Deity are several times expressed."—Dodwell's sermon in answer to Whiston, p. 15, 16.

§ 2. If the torments of hell are *purifying* pains, that purge the damned from their sins, it must be by bringing them to repentance, convincing them of the evil of sin, and inducing them to forsake it, and with a sincere heart to turn from sin to God, and heartily to choose virtue and holiness. There is no

other way for sinners being purged as moral agents; and, if hell fire is the means of any other purification, it cannot be a moral purification.

If the wicked in hell are the subjects of torments, in order to their purification, and so being fitted for, and finally brought to eternal happiness: then they are the subjects of a dispensation, that is truly a dispensation of love, and of divine and infinite goodness and benevolence, towards them.—And if the design of the pains of hell be that of kind and benevolent chastisement, to bring sinners to repentance, and compliance with the divine will; then we cannot suppose that they will be continued after the sinner has repented, and is actually brought to yield and comply. For that would be to continue them for no purpose; to go on using means and endeavours to obtain the end, when the end is accomplished, and the thing aimed at is fully obtained already.—Moreover, if the damned, after many ages suffering extreme torment in hell, are to be delivered, and made perfectly and eternally happy, then they must be in a state of probation during this long season of their confinement to such extreme misery. If they are not in a state of probation, or on any trial how they will behave themselves, under these severe and terrible inflictions of wrath, but are to be delivered and made eternally happy at the end of a certain period: then what restraints are they under from giving an unbounded loose and license to their wickedness, in expressions of enmity against God, in cursing and blaspheming, and whatever their hearts are inclined to? And if they are in such a state as this, wherein they are thus left to unrestrained wickedness, and every curb to their most wicked inclination is taken off, being nevertheless sure of deliverance and everlasting happiness; how far is this state fit to be a state of purgation of rational creatures and moral agents from sin, being a state wherein they are so far from means of repentance, reformation, and entirely reclaiming and purging them from sin, that all manner of means are rather removed; and so much is every restraint taken off, that they are given up wholly to sin, which, instead of purifying them, will tend above all things that can be conceived, to harden them in sin, and desperately establish the habits of it?

§ 3. A state of purgation of moral agents, that is, a state to bring sinners to repentance and reformation, and not a state of trial, is a gross absurdity. If any should say, that, "though we should maintain that the pains of hell are purifying pains, to bring sinners to repentance, in order to their deliverance and eternal happiness; yet there will be no necessity of supposing, either that they may sin with impunity, and so without restraint; or that they are properly in a state of probation: for they have no probation whether they shall finally have eternal

happiness, because it is absolutely determined by the benevolent Creator, concerning his intelligent creatures, that they shall finally be brought to a state of happiness; but yet their circumstances may be such as may tend greatly to restrain their wickedness, because that the time of their torment shall be longer or shorter, according as they behave themselves under their chastisements more or less perversely; or that their torment shall be raised to a greater height, and additions be made in proportion to the wickedness they commit in their purgatory flames:" To this, I ANSWER: Even on this supposition they are in a state of *probation* for a more speedy possession of eternal life and happiness, and deliverance from further misery and punishment; this makes their state as much a state of probation, as their state in the present life. For here it is supposed by these men, that sinners are not in a state of trial, whether ever they shall obtain eternal happiness or no; because that is absolutely determined, and the determination known, or knowable concerning all without any trial. But only it is a state of trial whether they shall obtain eternal life so soon as at the end of their lives, or at the day of judgment. Neither have they any trial during this life, whether they shall escape all affliction and chastisement for sin or not; but whether they shall be relieved from a state of suffering so soon, and shall escape those severer and longer chastisements that, with respect to many, are to come afterward.

And on the supposition of the objection, there must be the proper circumstances of a state of probation in hell, as well as on earth. There they must likewise be continued in that state of free agency, that renders them properly the subjects of judgment and retribution. For on the supposition of the objection, they shall be punished for their wickedness in hell, by an addition to their misery proportioned to their sin; and they shall be the subjects of God's merciful strivings, endeavours, and means to bring them to repentance, as well as here. And there must be a divine judgment after the trial, to determine their retribution, as much as after this life. And the same or like things, must be determined by the Supreme Judge, as will be determined at the day of judgment. At that great day, on the supposition of such as I oppose, What will be determined concerning the impenitent? not what their eternal state shall be, but only whether they shall have eternal happiness immediately; whether they have repented, and are qualified for immediate admission to heavenly glory; or, whether the bestowment of it shall be delayed, and further chastisements made use of, and so it must be again after their castigatory purifying pains. At the end of all there must be a judgment, whether now they truly repent, and so have performed the condition of deliverance, and immediate admission to the

state of the blessed, or whether there shall be a further season of misery; which brings it in all respects to be a proper judgment, as much as that at the general resurrection; and the preceding time of the use of means and God's striving with them to bring them to repentance, is as much a proper time of trial in order to judgment, as the time of this life.

§ 4. But if the damned are in a state of trial, let it be considered how unreasonable this is. If they are in a state of trial, then they must be in a state of liberty and moral agency, as those men will doubtless own; and so, according to their notion of liberty, must be under no necessity of continuing in their rebellion and wickedness, but may cast away their abominations, and turn to God and their duty, in a thorough subjection to his will, very speedily. And then, seeing the end of their probationary state, and the severe means God uses with them to bring them to repentance, is obtained; how unreasonable will it be to suppose, that God, after this, would continue them still under hell-torments for a long succession of ages? But if God should speedily deliver them on their speedy repentance; how are the threatenings and predictions of their everlasting punishment fulfilled in any sense, according to the sense even of those who deny the absolute eternity of the misery of hell, and hold, that the words *everlasting* and *for ever*, &c., when applied to the misery of the damned, are not to be taken in the strictest sense? They yet allow, they signify a very long time, a great many ages.

§ 5. If the devils and damned spirits are in a state of probation, and have liberty of will, and are under the last and most extreme means to bring them to repentance, and, consequently, the greatest means, having the strongest tendency of all to be effectual; I say, if thus, then it is possible, that the greatest part, if not all of them, may be reclaimed by those extreme means, and may be brought to thorough repentance before the day of judgment; yea, it is possible, it might be very soon. And, if so, how could it certainly be predicted concerning the devil, that he would do such and such great things in opposition to Christ and his church, from age to age? and that, at last, he should be judged and punished, and have God's wrath more terribly executed upon him? as Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." And how is it said in Scripture, that when he fell, he was cast down from heaven, and reserved under chains of darkness unto judgment? The expression seems naturally to signify strong and irrefragable bonds, which admit of no comfort or hope of escape. And, besides, a being reserved in chains unto judgment, is not consistent with the appointment of another time

of trial and opportunity to escape the judgment and condemnation. It is said, Jude 6, "They are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." And if any of the separate souls of the wicked, that are in the case that the soul of the rich man was in, when he died and lift up his eyes in hell, being in torments, should repent and be delivered *before* the day of judgment, and so should appear at the right hand among the righteous at that day, then how could that be verified, 2 Cor. v. 10. "For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether good or bad?" And we have reason to think, that the time of standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, which the apostle has a special respect to, is the day of judgment, if we compare this with other scriptures; as that of the same apostle, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." And many other places.

§ 6. And how does their being in a state of trial, many of them for so many ages after death before the day of judgment, during all which time they have opportunity to repent, consist with those words of Christ, Mark viii. 38. "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels?" How is their continuing in a state of trial from the time of that generation, and from the end of their lives, to the day of judgment, consistent with its being declared to them from God beforehand, that they shall certainly be condemned at the day of judgment? or, with Christ's certifying them beforehand, that whatever trial they shall have, whatever opportunity God should give them for repentance and pardon, for so many ages, all would be in vain; which, in effect, is passing the sentence. We may argue, in like manner, from those words, Matt. x. 14, 15. "And whosoever shall not receive you, and hear your words,—Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." So Matt. xi. 21—24. "Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida!—I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

It is here declared, what the state of those obstinate unbelievers should be at the day of judgment, for their wickedness here in the body, with an asseveration *I say unto you.* And sentence indeed is passed beforehand upon them by their Judge,

concerning the punishment that shall be executed upon them at the day of judgment. The declaration is made in the form of a solemn denunciation or sentence: *Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida*, &c. And is it reasonable to suppose, that the very Judge that is to judge them at the end of the world, would peremptorily declare, that they should not escape punishment at the day of judgment; yea, solemnly denounce sentence upon them, dooming them to the distinguished punishment they should then suffer for their obstinacy in their lifetime; and yet appoint another time of trial, of a great many hundred years between their death and the day of judgment, wherein they should have opportunity to escape that punishment?

§ 7. It is here also to be observed, that the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah should be condemned to misery at the day of judgment, though they had already been in their purifying flames, and in a state of probation. The apostle (Rom. ii. 16.) repeatedly tells us, when these things shall be, that men shall thus receive their retribution; "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel;" which shows that this life is the only state of trial, and that all men shall be judged at the end of the world according to their behaviour in this life, and not according to their behaviour in another state of trial, between this life and that day. So it is apparent, by 2 Thess. i. 5—9. "Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God—seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," &c. Here it is manifest, that all who are obstinate unbelievers, rejectors of the gospel, shall at the day of judgment, be punished with everlasting destruction. So that no room is left for a state of trial, and a space to repent before that time for ages in hell. So it is apparent Matt. xxv. that none will be found at the right hand, but they that have done such good works, as can be done only in this world; which would not be declared beforehand, if there was an opportunity given for millions of others to obtain that privilege.

§ 8. It may be proved, that the day of man's trial, and the time of God's striving in the use of means to bring him to repentance, and waiting for his repentance under the use of means, will not be continued after this life, from those words, Gen. vi. 6. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." It is as much as to say, that it is not fit that this day of trial and opportunity should last always to obstinate

perverse sinners. It is fit some bounds should be set to my striving and waiting on such as abuse the day of my patience; and that merciful means and gracious calls should not be continued, without limits, to them that trample all means and mercies under foot, and turn a deaf ear to all calls and invitations, and treat them with constant contempt. Therefore I will fix a certain limit; I will set their bounds to one hundred and twenty years; when, if they repent not, I will put an end to all their lives, and with their lives shall be an end of my striving and waiting. This, which in Genesis is called *God's spirit striving*, is by the apostle Peter expressed by *the waiting of the long-suffering of God;* 1 Pet. iii. 20. But, according to the doctrine we are opposing, instead of God's striving and using means to bring those wicked men to repentance, and waiting in the use of striving and endeavours one hundred and twenty years, or to the end of their lives, and no longer; he has gone on still since that, for above four thousand years, striving with them in the use of more powerful means to bring them to repentance, and waiting on them, and will continue to do so for so long a time afterward, that the time is often called everlasting, and represented as enduring for ever and ever.

§ 9. These words of Christ, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work," (John ix. 4.) prove that there is no other day of trial after this life. Christ having undertaken for us, and taken on him our nature, and appearing in the form of a servant, and standing as our surety and representative, had a great work appointed him of God to do in this life for eternity. He could not obtain eternal life and happiness for himself any other way, than by doing that work in this life, which was the time of his probation for eternity, as well as ours. And therefore his words imply as much as if he had said, I must do that work which God has appointed me to do for eternity, that great service which must be done, as I would be eternally happy, now while the day of life lasts, which is the only day appointed for the trial of man's faithfulness in the service of God, in order to his being accepted to eternal rewards. Death is coming, which will be the setting of the sun, and the end of this day; after which no work will remain, nothing to be done that will be of any significance in order to the obtaining of the recompense of eternal felicity.

§ 10. And doubtless to the same purpose is that in Eccles. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: For there is no work, (or no man can work,) nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." As much as to say, after this life, nothing can be done, nothing invented or devised in order to your happiness; no wisdom or art will serve you to any such purpose, if you neglect the time

of the present life. It is unreasonable to suppose the wise man means only that we should in this life do all that we can in temporal concerns, and to promote our temporal interest, and that nothing can be done towards this after this life; not only as this would be an observation of very little importance, it being as flat and impertinent as if he had said, Whatever your hand finds to do this year, do it with your might; for nothing that you do or devise the next year, will signify any thing to promote your interest and happiness this year; but also because the wise man himself, in the conclusion of this book, informs us that his drift through the whole book is, to induce us to do a spiritual work; to fear God and keep his commandments, in order, not to happiness in this life, (which he tells us throughout the book is never to be expected,) but in order to a future happiness and retribution in consequence of a judgment to come; chap. xii. 13, 14. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments. For this is the whole duty (*i. e.* the whole business, the whole concern) of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

§ 11. If the wicked in hell are in a state of trial, under severe chastisement, as means in order to their repentance and obtaining the benefit of God's favour in eternal rewards, then they are in a state of such *freedom* as makes them moral agents and the proper subjects of judgment and retribution. Then those terrible chastisements are made use of as the most powerful means of all, more efficacious than all the means used in this life which prove ineffectual, and which proving insufficient to overcome sinners' obstinacy, and prevail with their hard hearts, God is compelled to relinquish them all, and have recourse to those torments as the last means, the most effectual and powerful. If the torments of hell are to last ages of ages, then it must be because sinners in hell all this while are obstinate; and though they are free agents as to this matter, yet they wilfully and perversely refuse, even under such great means, to repent, forsake their sins, and turn to God. It must be farther supposed, that all this while they have the offers of immediate mercy and deliverance made to them, if they will comply. Now, if this be the case, and they shall go on in such wickedness, and continue in such extreme obstinacy and pertinaciousness, for so many ages, (as is supposed, by its being thought their torments shall be so long continued,) how desperately will their guilt be increased? How many thousand times more guilty at the end of the term, than at the beginning? And therefore they will be much the more proper objects of divine severity, deserving God's wrath, and still a thousand times more severe or longer continued chastisements than the past; and therefore it is not reasonable to sup-

pose, that all the damned should be delivered from misery, and received to God's favour, and made the subjects of eternal salvation and glory at that time, when they are many thousand times more unworthy of it, more deserving of continuance in misery, than when they first were cast into hell. It is not likely that the infinitely wise God should so order the matter. And if their misery should be augmented, and still lengthened out much longer, to atone for their new contracted guilt; they must be supposed to continue impenitent, till that second additional time of torment is ended; at the end of which their guilt will still be risen higher, and vastly increased beyond what it was before. And, at this rate, where can there be any place for an end of their misery?

§ 12. It further appears from what was observed above, that the sinner continuing obstinate in wickedness under such powerful means to reclaim him, for so long a time, will be so far from being more and more purged, or brought nearer to repentance, that he will be further from it. Wickedness in his heart will be vastly established and increased. For it may be laid down as an axiom, that the longer men continue wilfully in wickedness, the more is the habit of sin established, and the more and more will the heart be hardened in it. Again, it may be laid down as another axiom, that the greater and more powerful the means are, that are used to bring men to reform and repent, which they resist, and are obstinate under, the more desperately are men hardened in sin, and the more the principle of it in the heart is confirmed. It may be laid down as a third axiom, that long continuance in perverse and obstinate rebellion against any particular kind of means, tends to render those particular means vain, ineffectual, and hopeless.

After the damned in hell have stood it out with such prodigious perverseness and stoutness, for ages of ages, in their rebellion and enmity against God, refusing to bow to his will under such constant, severe, mighty chastisements, attended all the while with offers of mercy, what a desperate degree of hardness of heart and fixed strength of habitual wickedness will they have contracted at last, and inconceivably further will they be from a penitent, humble, and pure heart, than when first cast into hell! And if the torments should be lengthened out still longer, and also their impenitence, (as by the supposition one will not end before the other does:) still the further will the heart be from being purified. And so, at this rate, the torments will never at all answer their end, and must be lengthened out to all eternity.

§ 13. Matt. v. 25, 26. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee

to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." These words imply, that sinners are in the way with their adversary, having opportunity to be reconciled to him but for a short season, inasmuch as it is intimated, that they must agree with him quickly, or they shall cease to be in the way with him, or to have opportunity to obtain his favour any more. But, if they shall be continued in a state of *probation* after death to the end of the world, and after that for ages, how far, how very far, are these words of Christ from representing the matter as it is?

§ 14. That some even in this world are utterly forsaken of God, and given up to their own hearts' lusts, proves that these men never will be purified from their sins. That God should, in the future world, use great means to purify them, and fit them for eternal happiness and glory, in the enjoyment of himself, is not consistent with the supposition, that after the use of great means and endeavours with them in this world, he gives them up to sin, because of their incorrigibleness and perverse obstinate continuance in rebellion, under the use of those great means, and so leaves them to be desperately hardened in sin, and to go on and increase their guilt, and multiply transgressions to their utter ruin; which is agreeable to manifold representations of scripture. This is not agreeable to the scheme of such as suppose, that God is all the while, before and after death, prosecuting the design of purifying and preparing them for eternal glory. Consider Psal. xcii. 7. "When the wicked spring as grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." These places show, God has no merciful design with those whom he gives up to sin.

§ 15. The apostle, in Heb. iv. 4—6, says, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, &c. if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," &c. The apostle speaks of their renovation to repentance, as never likely to happen; for this reason, that they have proved irreclaimable under such great means to bring them to repentance, and have thereby so desperately hardened their hearts, and contracted such great guilt by sinning against such great light, and trampling on such great privileges. But if so, how much more unlikely still will it be, that they should ever be renewed to repentance, after they have gone on still more and more to harden their hearts by an obstinate, wilful continuance in sin, many thousand years longer, under much greater means; and have therefore done immensely more to establish the habit of sin, and increase the hardness of their

hearts; and after their guilt is so vastly increased, instead of being diminished? If it be impossible to bring them to repentance, after they have rebelled against such light and knowledge of Christ, and the things of another world, as they had in this life; how much more impossible is it, when, added to this, they have had that infinitely greater and clearer knowledge and view of those things to be manifested at the day of judgment? Then they shall see Christ in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels; shall see his great majesty, and know the truth of his promises and threatenings, by sight and experience; and shall see all those ineffable manifestations of the glory of Christ, of his power, omniscience, strict inflexible justice, infinite holiness and purity, truth and faithfulness, and his infinite mercy to penitents. They shall then see the dreadful consequences of rebellion and wickedness, and the infinitely happy and glorious consequences of the contrary; and, even at this time, (on the supposition) have the offers of mercy and deliverance from that dreadful misery, and the enjoyment of the favour of their great Judge, and participation of all the happiness and glory of the righteous which they shall see at his right hand, if then they will throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and repent, and comply with his will. But if they still, from the greatness of their enmity and perverseness, obstinately and wilfully refuse, yea, and continue still thus refusing, even after they have actually felt the terrible wrath of God, and are cast into the lake of fire; yea, after they have continued there many ages, all the while under offers of mercy on repentance: I say, if it be impossible to renew them to repentance, after their rebelling against, and trampling on the light and knowledge, and means used with them in this world, so that it is not to be expected, because of the degree of hardness and guilt contracted by it; how much less is it to be expected at the day of judgment, after all this obstinacy manifested, and guilt contracted! If guilt be contracted by despising such means and advantages as the apostle has respect to in this life, that it may be compared to guilt that would be contracted by crucifying Christ afresh; how much more, when, added to this, they shall so openly have despised Christ, when appearing to them in all the terrors, and glories, and love, that shall be manifested at the day of judgment, in their immediate and most clear view, and all is offered to them, if they will but yield subjection to him; and their enmity shall have appeared so desperate, as rather to choose that dreadful lake of fire, and shall have continued in their choice even after they have felt the severity of that torment without rest day or night for many ages?

§ 16. That all shall not be finally purified and saved, is manifest from Matt. xii. 31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men:

but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—Also, Mark iii. 28, 29. "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and all blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."—And 1 John v. 16. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say he shall pray for it." From each of these places, it is manifest, that he that is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall surely be damned, without any deliverance from his punishment, or end to it. The various expressions that are used, serve much to certify and fix the import of others. In Matt. xii. 31, it is said, "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." The negative is general, and equally respects all times. If this sin should be forgiven at a remote time, it would be as contrary to such a negative, as if it were forgiven immediately. But, to determine us that Christ has respect to all times, even the remotest, and that he means to deny that he shall be forgiven at any time whatsoever, in Mark it is said, "He shall never be forgiven; or, hath never forgiveness;" and, lest this never should be interpreted to mean, never as long as he lives, or never in this world, it is said in Matt. xii. 32. "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." And lest it should be said, that although he never is forgiven, yet that does not hinder but that there may be an end to his punishment; because he may suffer all he deserves in suffering a temporal punishment, or punishment of a limited, long duration; and he that is acquitted in paying all his debt, is not said to be forgiven his debt: another expression is used in Mark, which shows, that he shall ever suffer damnation, and never have deliverance from his misery, whether by forgiveness or without it.—"Hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." And the forementioned expressions, "He shall never be forgiven;" "He hath never forgiveness;" "Shall not be forgiven in this world, nor the world to come," show the meaning of the word *eternal* here, to be such as absolutely excludes any period, any time of favour, wherein condemnation and punishment shall have ceased. And what the apostle John says of those who commit the unpardonable sin, confirms the whole, and proves, that he that has committed this sin remains under no dispensation of mercy, and that no favour is ever to be hoped for from God; and therefore it is

not our duty to pray for such favour. "There is a sin unto death, I do not say he shall pray for it;" or, I give you no direction to pray for them that sin this sin unto death.

§ 17. Thus it is evident, that all wicked men will not have an end to their damnation; but when it is said, they are in danger of eternal or everlasting damnation, the word *eternal* is to be understood in the strictest sense. The same terms are used concerning all impenitent sinners, that they shall be sentenced to eternal punishment, and shall go into everlasting punishment, &c.—That their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and they shall be tormented for ever and ever; and such terms are used after this world comes to an end; and also when they who have committed the unpardonable sin, and others, shall be sentenced all together to an everlasting fire, in the same terms. It is unreasonable to suppose that the punishment of some will be everlasting, in an infinitely different sense from others jointly sentenced; and that the duration of the punishment of one shall be perfectly as nothing, compared with the duration of the punishment of the other, infinitely less than a second to a million of ages. And it is unreasonable to suppose such a difference, also on this account, that there cannot be such a difference in the demerit of them, that commit the unpardonable sin, and the demerit of the sins of all other wicked men, some of whom are exceedingly, and almost inconceivably wicked. There cannot be a truly infinite difference in their guilt, as there must be a properly infinite difference between the dreadfulness of those torments that have an end, however long continued, and however great,and the torments of a truly and strictly everlasting fire.

§ 18. If the damned in hell shall all finally be saved, they shall be saved without Christ. It is manifest, that Christ's saving work will be at an end at the day of judgment; for, as Christ has a twofold office, that of the *Saviour* of the world, and the *Judge* of the world: so, the business of the latter office properly succeeds the former. It is not fit in the nature of things, that he should come into the world, and appear openly in the character of *universal Judge*, to decide men's state—in consequence of the trial there has been for making their state better by salvation—till that trial is over, and all its effects completed, when no more is to be hoped as to altering their state for the better by his salvation. Therefore Christ, at his *first* coming, appeared in order to *save* men from condemnation, and a sentence of eternal misery; and not to *judge* them, as he tells us, John xii. 47. "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world." See, also, chap. iii. 17. and viii. 15. But the great business he will come upon at his *second* coming, as is abundantly declared, is to judge the

world. And it is also exceedingly plain, that Christ's saving work will be at an end at the day of judgment; because we read, (2 Cor. xv.) that, at the end of the world, he will deliver up his kingdom; he will resign his commission: which proves that the work of salvation, which is the design of it, will be at an end, when all his enemies, all that rejected him, and would not have him to rule over them, and so have failed of his salvation, shall be made his footstool, shall be condemned and destroyed. Instead of being the heirs of salvation, he shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, &c. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, 10.

§ 19. If the damned, after they have suffered a while, are to be delivered, and to have eternal life, then the present dispensation of grace and life to the fallen children of men, that was introduced by Christ and his apostles, is not the last; but another is to be introduced after this has proved unprofitable and ineffectual. But, that a new dispensation of grace should thus be introduced, because that which was brought in by Christ and his apostles, proves weak and unprofitable through men's corruption, and there appears to be need of one which shall be more effectual, is not agreeable to the Scripture. For this dispensation is spoken of as the last and most perfect, wherein perfection was reached, Heb. vii. 19. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." And chap. xi. 40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect." The ancient dispensation is spoken of as that which God found fault with, in proving ineffectual through the corruption of men; and so he introduced a new administration, that should not be liable to exception, and, therefore, should not wax old, or be ever liable to vanish away and give place to another. Heb. viii. 6. to the end. So he speaks of the things of that ancient dispensation, as things which were liable to be shaken and removed; but of the things of the new dispensation then introduced, as those that could not be shaken, but should remain for ever; Heb. xii. 25. to the end; and 2 Cor. iii. 11. The dispensation of the New Testament, is often spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament as an everlasting dispensation; Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. chap. xxxii. 40; Isa. lxi. 8; Ezek. xxxvii. 26.

§ 20. To suppose that, after all the means of grace that are used in this world, Moses and the prophets, Christ and the gospel, the warnings of God's word, and the exhibitions of glorious gospel grace, have been despised and obstinately withstood, so as to make the case desperate as to their success,

God has other means in reserve, to be used afterward, to make men holy, that will be more powerful, and shall be effectual; is not agreeable to Scripture. Particularly, Luke xvi. 27. to the end: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." And this is especially manifest, from Rev. xxii. 10, 11, 12. "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

I think the meaning must be either, The time is quickly coming, when every man's state will be fixed, inasmuch as I am quickly coming to judgment, to fix every man's state unalterably, according as his work shall be; and after that there will be no alteration, nor any means or endeavours in order to it; but he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy let him be filthy still: and if this be the meaning, it makes it evident, that Christ will not immediately proceed to the use of the most powerful and effectual means of all, to change the state of the unjust, and filthy, to purify them and make them holy, and fit them for eternal glory, with infallible success.—Or, the meaning must be this, which seems to be much the most probable: Christ, having given this last revelation to his church to be added to the book of Scripture, with which the canon was to be shut up and sealed by the instrumentality of the apostle John, who lived the longest of the apostles, and wrote this book after all the rest were dead; orders John (ver. 10.) to publish this book wherein such great future judgments are revealed as coming on the wicked, and such an affecting declaration of the future glory of the saints, to enforce the rest of God's word and means of grace; and then intimates, that no more revelations are to be expected, no more instructions and warnings are to be added to the word of God, as the steady means of grace, any further to confirm and enforce the rest; that the next revelation that is to be expected, and that Christ will make of himself to the world, is to be his immediate appearance in judgment, to fix unalterably every man's state according to his works, according to the improvement he shall have made of those past revelations, instructions, and warnings; and therefore, those that will not be purified by those means, are not to expect that better, or other

means, will ever be used with them; but he that is unjust must remain so still, and he that is filthy must be filthy still, and he that is righteous shall be righteous still, and he that is holy shall be holy still. Thus Christ takes leave of his church till his last coming, warning them to improve the means of grace they have, and informing them that they are never to have any other: *q. d.* They have Moses and the prophets; and, in the writings of the New Testament, they have more glorious, powerful, and efficacious revelations of me. Those writings I now finish and seal. Let them hear these, and make a good improvement of them: for these are the last means I shall ever use to change man's state. This is inconsistent with his reserving his greatest and most powerful means, with a determined certain success, to be used after the day of judgment.

§ 21. They who suppose the damned are made to suffer the torments of hell for their purification, suppose, that God is herein prosecuting his grand design of benevolence to his creatures; yea, benevolence to the sufferers; and that he does not use these severe means but from necessity for their good, because all gentle remedies prove ineffectual. Now, it is unreasonable to suppose, that God is under any necessity of inflicting such extreme torments upon them for so long a time, in order to their being brought to repentance; and that,

1. If we consider the *nature of things*: torments inflicted have *no tendency* to bring a wicked man to repentance directly and properly, if by repentance we mean an alteration of the disposition, and appetites, and taste of the mind. We know by experience, that pain inflicted for gratifying an appetite, may make men afraid to gratify the appetite, but they do not change the inclination, or destroy the appetite. They may make men willing to comply with external exercises; of which they have a distaste, and to which their heart, in its relish and inclinations, is averse; yet not from love to the things complied with, but from hatred of pain, and love of ease. So that the man complies in some sense: but his *heart* does not comply. He is only driven, and as it were forced; and an increase of pain alters not the nature of things. It may make a man more earnestly to desire freedom from pain; but still there is no more to be expected from it, than is in the tendency of pain, which is not to give a new nature, a new heart, or a new natural relish and disposition. It is not granted, that even long continued pains and practice will gradually raise an habitual love to virtue. The pains of the damned being great and long continued, may more and more convince them of the folly of their negligence and fearlessness in sin, and may make them willing to take some pains, but will not show them the beauty of holiness, or the odiousness of sin, so as to cause them to hate sin on its own account.

Can any one that considers human nature, especially of those that deny an innate, desperate wickedness of heart, (as the men that we have this controversy with generally do,) doubt in the least, whether, if a man should be in a furnace of fire for one day only, alive and full of quick sense, and should retain a full and lively remembrance of his misery, it would not be sufficient to make him wholly comply with all the pains and outward self-denial requisite in order to an universal, external obedience to the precepts of the word of God, rather than have those torments renewed and continued for ages; and indeed rather than endure one more such day? What pains would not such a man be willing to suffer? What labours could be too much? What would he not be willing to part with, in foregoing worldly wealth or pleasures? Would not the most covetous man, that had felt such a rod as this, be willing to part with all his treasures of silver and gold? and the most ambitious man be willing to live in a cottage or wilderness? the most voluptuous man to part with his pleasures? Would he need first to endure many ages of such torment, before he would be willing thus far to comply? It is against all principles of human nature to suppose it. If he retains the remembrance of the torment, in a lively idea of it, it must unspeakably outweigh the most lively and affecting and attractive ideas of the good things of the world. The supposition, therefore, of his not being brought to compliance by less torment, is as unreasonable as to suppose that a mote of dust would sink the scale, being put in a balance with a talent of lead, or with ten thousand talents. If the Most High compassionate these poor wretches, and has nothing but a kind and gracious design of infinite mercy and bounty towards them, why does he take such dreadful measures with them? Will no other do? Cannot infinite wisdom find out some gentler method to bring to pass the same design? If it be said, that no other can accomplish the effect, consistently with the freedom of will,—I answer, What means can be devised, having a greater tendency to drive men, and compel them to comply with the thing required, (if there be any such thing, without acting freely, and as persons left to their own free choice, than such a rod, not only held over, but used upon them in such an amazing manner, by an omnipotent hand.

2. It is apparent, from what has often come to pass, that God is in no necessity of making use of such dreadful and long continued torments, in order to bring sinners to repentance. It is most unreasonable to suppose, that no sinners that ever were converted in this world, were, before their conversion, as wicked and as hard-hearted, as some of those that have died impenitent; as Saul, the persecutor, afterward the apostle Paul, and some of the converts, in the 2d chapter of

Acts, who had had a hand in Christ's crucifixion, and innumerable instances of persecutors and others, who have been brought to repentance since those days. Such were converted by gentler means than those pains of hell, in what the Scripture calls everlasting burning; and that without any infringement of liberty necessary to their being moral agents. It would be unreasonable to suppose, that all those eighteen, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were good men. But Christ would not have his hearers imagine they were worse than themselves; and yet intimates, that there was a possibility of their escaping future misery by repentance.

3. So far as pain and affliction are made use of to bring men to repentance, it is apparent God can make infinitely less severe chastisement effectual, together with such influences and assistances of his Spirit, as are not inconsistent with the persons' moral agency in their forsaking sin and turning to God. And, if it should be said, that none of them had the habits of sin so confirmed, as all such as die in sin; I would answer, That this is very unreasonably supposed; and if it should be allowed, yet it cannot be pretended, that the difference of guilt and hard-heartedness is proportionable at all to the severity of the chastisement used for purgation. If no more than ten degrees of pain, or one year's chastisement be requisite for the overcoming of five degrees of strength of the habit of sin, one would think, that less than 100,000 degrees, or 100,000 years' chastisement, should be sufficient to overcome ten degrees of strength of the same habit.

§ 22. If the torments of hell are purifying pains, and are used by a God of universal benevolence towards his creatures, as necessary means for the purgation of the wicked from sin, and their being fitted for, and finally brought to eternal happiness in the enjoyment of the love of God; then it will follow, that the damned in hell are still the objects of God's mercy and kindness, and that in the torments they suffer, they are the subjects of a dispensation of grace and benevolence. All is for their good; all is the best kindness that can be done them, the most benevolent treatment they are capable of, in their state of mind; and, in all, God is but chastising them as a wise and loving father, with a grieved and compassionate heart, gives necessary chastisement to sons whom he loves, and whose good he seeks to the utmost; in all he does he is only prosecuting a design of infinite kindness and favour. And indeed, some of the chief of those who are in the scheme of purifying pains, expressly maintain, that instead of being the fruits of vindictive justice, they are the effects of God's benevolence, not only to the system of intelligent creatures in general, but to the sufferers themselves. Now, how far are

these things from being agreeable to the representation which is made of things in the Holy Scriptures?

The Scriptures represent the damned as thrown away of God; as things that are good for nothing; and which God makes no account of; Matt. xiii. 48. As dross, and not gold and silver, or any valuable metal; Psalm cxix. 119. "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth as dross." So Ezek. xxii. 18. Jer. vi. 28—30; as salt that has lost its savour; as good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men; as stubble that is left, and as the chaff thrown out to be scattered by the wind, and go whither that shall happen to carry it, instead of being gathered and laid up as that which is of any value. Psalm i. 4. Job xxi. 18. and xxxv. 5; as that which shall be thrown away as wholly worthless, as chaff and stubble and tares; all which are thrown away as not worthy of any care to save them; yea, are thrown into the fire, to be burnt up as mere nuisances, as fit for nothing but to be destroyed, and, therefore, are cast into the fire, to be destroyed. and done with. Matt. iii. 12. and xii. 30; Job xxi. 18; as barren trees, trees that are good for nothing; and, not only so, but cumberers of the ground; and, as such, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. Matt. iii. 10. and vii. 19. Luke xiii. 7; as barren branches in a vine, that are cut off and cast away; as good for nothing, and gathered and burned. John xv. 6; as thrown out, and purged away, as the filth of the world. Thus, it is said, Job xx. 7. that "the wicked shall perish for ever, as his own dung." They are spoken of as those that shall be spewed out of God's mouth; as thrown into the lake of fire; as the great sink of all the filth of the creation; Rev. xxi. 8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their share in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." As briers and thorns, that are not only wholly worthless in a field, but hurtful and pernicious; and are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned; Heb. vi. *i. e.* the husbandman throws them into the fire, and so has done with them for ever. He does not still take care of them, in order to make them fruitful and flourishing plants in his garden of delights. The wicked, it is said, shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world; Job xviii. 18. Instead of being treated by God with benevolence, chastening them with the compassion and kindness of a father, for their great and everlasting good, they, at that day, when God shall gather his children together, to make them experience the blessed fruits of the love of an heavenly Father, shall be shut out as dogs; Rev. xxi. 7, 8. with chap. xxii. 14, 15. And are represented as vessels of dishonour, vessels of wrath, fit for

nothing else, but to contain wrath and misery. They are spoken of as those that perish and lose their souls—that are lost; (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Those that lose themselves, and are cast away; those that are destroyed, consumed, &c.; which representations do not agree with such as are under a dispensation of kindness, and the means of a physician, in order to their eternal life, health, and happiness, though the means are severe. When God, of old, by his prophets, denounced his terrible judgments against Jerusalem and the people of Israel, against Moab, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria, &c., which judgments, though long-continued, were not designed to be perpetual; there were mixed with those awful denunciations, or added to them, promises or intimations of future mercy. But, when the Scripture speaks of God's dealings with ungodly men in another world, there are nothing but declarations and denunciations of wrath and misery, and no intimations of mercy; no gentle terms used, no significations of divine pity, no exhortations to humiliation under God's awful hand, or calls to seek his face and favour, and turn and repent. The account that the Scripture gives of the treatment that wicked men shall meet with after this life, is very inconsistent with the notion of their being from necessity subjected to harsh means of cure, and severe chastisement, with a benevolent, gracious design of their everlasting good: particularly the manner in which Christ will treat them at the day of judgment. He will bid the wicked depart from him as cursed.

§ 23. We have no account of any invitations to accept of mercy; any counsels to repent, that they may speedily be delivered from this misery. But, it is represented, that then they shall be made his footstool. He shall triumph over them. He will trample upon them as men are wont to tread grapes in a wine-press, when they trample with all their might, to that very end, that they may effectually crush them in pieces. He will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and, as he says, their blood shall be sprinkled on his garments, and he will stain all his raiment, Isaiah lxiii. at the beginning; Rev. xiv. 19, 20. and chap. xix. 15; in which last place, it is said, he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. These things do not savour of chastening with compassion and benevolence, and as still prosecuting a design of love toward them, that he may in the end actually be their Saviour, and the means of their eternal glory. There is nothing in the account of the day of judgment, that looks as though saints had any love or pity for the wicked, on account of the terrible long-continued torments which they must suffer. Nor, indeed will the accounts that are given, admit of supposing any such thing. We have an account of their judging them, and being with Christ in condemning them, concurring in the

sentence, wherein he bids them begone from him as cursed with devils into eternal fire; but no account of their praying for them, nor of their exhorting them to consider and repent.

They shall not be grieved, but rather rejoice at the glorious manifestations of God's justice, holiness, and majesty in their dreadful perdition, and shall triumph with Christ; Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. at the beginning. They shall be made Christ's footstool, and so they shall be the footstool of the saints. Psalm lxviii. 23. "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." If the damned were the objects of divine benevolence, and designed by God for the enjoyment of his eternal love, doubtless it would be required of all God's children to love them, and to pity them, and pray for them, and seek their good; as here, in this world, it is required of them to love their enemies, to be kind to the evil and unjust; and to pity and pray for the vilest of men, that were their own persecutors, because they are the subjects of God's mercy in many respects, and are fit objects of infinite divine mercy and love. If Christ, the head of all the Church, pities the damned, and seeks their good, doubtless his members ought to do so too. If the saints in heaven ought to pity the damned, as well as the saints on earth are obligated to pity the wicked that dwell here, doubtless their pity ought to be in some proportion to the greatness of the calamities of the objects of it, and the greatness of the number of those they see in misery. But if they had pity and sympathizing grief in such measure as this, for so many ages, what an alloy would it be to their happiness! God is represented as whetting his glittering sword, bending his bow, and making ready his arrows on the string against wicked men, and lifting his hand to heaven, and swearing, that he will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him, and make his arrows drunk with their blood, and that his sword shall devour their flesh. Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42, and Psalm vii. 11, 12, 13. Certainly this is the language and conduct of an enemy, not of a friend, or of a compassionate, chastising father.

§ 24. The *degree* of misery and torment that shall be inflicted, is an evidence, that God is not acting the part of benevolence and compassion, and only chastening from a kind and gracious principle and design. It is evident, that it is God's manner, when he thus afflicts men for their good, and chastens them with compassion, to stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind; to correct in measure; to consider the frame of those that are corrected; to remember their weakness, and to consider how little they can bear. He turns away his anger, and does not stir up all his wrath. Psalm lxxviii. 37, 38, 39. Isa. xxvii. 8. Jer. xxx. 11. and xlvi. 28. And it

is his manner, in the midst even of the severest afflictions, to order some mitigating circumstances, and to mix some mercy. But the misery of the damned is represented as unmixed. The wine of the wrath of God is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, that they may be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. They are tormented in a flame that burns within them, as well as round about them, and they shall be denied so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues. And God's wrath shall be inflicted in such a manner as to show his wrath, and make his strength known on the vessels of wrath, and which shall be punished with everlasting destruction; answerable to that glory of Christ's power in which he shall appear at the day of judgment, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with power and great glory, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. Can any imagine, that in all this God is only correcting from love, and that the subjects of these inflictions are some of those happy ones whom God corrects in order to teach them out of his law? whom he makes sore, and bindeth up? Job v. 17, 18. Psalm xciv. 12. There is nothing in Scripture that looks as if the damned were under the use of means to bring them to repentance. It is apparent that God's manner is, when he afflicts men, to bring to repentance by affliction, to join instructions, admonitions, and arguments to persuade.

But if we judge by scripture representations of the state of the damned, they are left destitute of all these things.—There are no prophets, or ministers, or good men, to admonish them, to reason and expostulate with them, or to set them good examples. There is a perfect separation made betwixt all the righteous and the wicked by a great gulf: so that there can be no passing from one to the other. They are left wholly to the company of devils, and others like them. When the rich man in hell cries to his father Abraham, begging a drop of water, he denies his request; and adds no exhortation to repentance. Wisdom is abundantly represented in the book of Proverbs, as counselling, warning, calling, inviting, and expostulating with such as are under means for the obtaining wisdom, and as waiting upon them in the use of means, that they may turn at her reproof. But as to such as are obstinate under these means of grace and calls of wisdom, till the time of their punishment comes, it is represented, that their fear shall come as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind; that distress and anguish shall come upon them: and that then it will be in vain for them to seek wisdom; that if they seek her early, they

shall not find her, and if they call upon her she will not hear; but instead of this, will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh; which certainly does not consist with the idea that the God of wisdom is still striving with them, and using means, in a benevolent and compassionate manner, to bring them to seek and embrace wisdom; still offering wisdom, with all her unspeakable benefits, if they will hearken to her voice and comply with her counsel. Is wisdom then actually using the most powerful and effectual means to bring them to this happiness, even such as shall surely be successful, though they have obstinately refused all others; and when wisdom called, they heretofore refused,—when she stretched forth her hand, they did not regard? Is he still most effectually acting the part of a friend, to deliver them from their distress and anguish, instead of laughing at their calamity? Prov. i, latter end. This declaration of wisdom, if it ever be fulfilled at all, will surely be fulfilled most completely and perfectly at the time appointed for obstinate sinners to receive their most perfect and complete punishment.

If all mankind, even such as live and die in their wickedness, are and ever will be the objects of Christ's good-will and mercy, and those whose eternal happiness he desires and seeks; then surely he would pray for all: but Christ declares that there are some that he prays not for. John xvii. 9. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Compared with ver. 14. "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Ver. 25. "The world hath not known thee, but I have known thee; and these have known that thou hast sent me;" and ver. 20. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." By this it appears that Christ prayed for all that should ever be true believers.—But he prayed not for those who should not be brought by the word of the apostles, and such means of grace as are used in this world, to believe in him, and should continue notwithstanding not to know God, and in enmity against true holiness or Christianity. These were such as Christ prayed not for.

§ 25. If sin and misery, and the second death, are to continue and prevail for so long a time after the day of judgment, with respect to great multitudes that Christ will finally save and deliver from those things, having perfectly conquered and abolished them; then how can the scriptures truly represent, that all enemies shall be put under his feet at the end of the world, and that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; and that then, having perfectly subdued all his enemies, he shall resign up the kingdom to the Father, and he himself be subject to the Father? as in 1 Cor. xv. 20—28. The time

of Christ's victory over death will be at the general resurrection and day of judgment, as is evident by ver. 54, with the foregoing context. The chief enemies that Christ came to destroy, with regard to such as should be saved, and be of his church, were *sin* and *misery*, or death consisting in sin, and death consisting in suffering the second death, unspeakably the greatest enemy that came by sin, infinitely more terrible than temporal death. But if the notion I am opposing be true, these greatest and worst enemies, instead of being subdued, shall have their principal reign afterward, for many ages at least; *viz.* sin in the sad effect and consequence of it, men's misery; and God shall have his strongest conflict with those enemies afterward; that is, shall strive against them in the use of the most powerful means.

§ 26. There is a great evidence, that the *devil* is not the subject of any dispensation of divine mercy and kindness, and that God is prosecuting no design of infinite goodness towards him, and that his pains are not purifying pains. It is manifest that, instead of any influence of his torments to bring him nearer to repentance, he has been from the beginning of his damnation, constantly, with all his might, exerting himself in prosecuting his wickedness, his violent, most haughty, and malignant opposition to God and man; fighting especially with peculiar virulence against Christ and his church; opposing with all his might, every thing that is good; seeking the destruction and misery of all mankind, with boundless and insatiable cruelty; on which account he is called Satan, the adversary, and Abaddon and Apollyon, the destroyer. He is represented as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, a viper, the old serpent, the great red dragon; red on account of his bloody, cruel nature. He is said to be a murderer from the beginning. He has murdered all mankind, has murdered their souls as well as their bodies. He was the murderer of Jesus Christ, by instigating Judas and his crucifiers. He has most cruelly shed the blood of an innumerable multitude of the children of God. He is emphatically called the evil one, that wicked one, &c. He is a liar, and the father of lies, and father of all the sin and wickedness that is, or ever has been in the world. He is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. It is said, that he that committeth sin is of the devil. For the devil sinneth from the beginning; and all wicked men are spoken of as his children. He has set up himself as god of this world, in opposition to the true God, and has erected a vast kingdom over the nations; and is constantly carrying on a war with the utmost earnestness, subtiliy, malice, and venom, against Jesus Christ, and all his holy and gracious designs: maintaining a kingdom of dark-

ness, wickedness, and misery, in opposition to Christ's kingdom of light, holiness, and peace; and thus will continue to do till the end of the world, as appears by Scripture prophecies.

§ 27. And God's dealings with him are infinitely far from being those of a *friend*, kindly seeking his infinite good, and designing nothing else in the end, but to make him eternally happy in love and favour, and blessed union with him. God is represented every where as acting the part of an enemy to him, that seeks and designs nothing in the final event but his destruction. The grand work of God's providence, which he is prosecuting from the beginning to the end of the world, *viz.* the work of redemption, is against him, to bruise or break in pieces his head, to cast him like lightning from heaven, from that height of power and dominion to which he has exalted himself, to tread him under foot, and to cause his people to trample and bruise, or crush him under foot, and gloriously to triumph over him. Christ, when he conquered him, made a show of him openly, triumphing over him. And, it is evident that, as it will be with the devil in this respect, so it will be with the wicked. This is reasonable to suppose, from what the Scripture represents of the relation wicked men stand in to the devil as his children, servants, subjects, instruments, and his property and possession. They are all ranked together with him in one kingdom, in one interest, and one company. And many of them are the great ministers of his kingdom, and to whom he has committed authority; such as the beast and false prophet that we read of in the Revelation. Now, how reasonable and natural is it to suppose, that those who are thus united should have their portion and lot together? As Christ's disciples, subjects, followers, soldiers, children, instruments and faithful ministers, shall have their part with him, in his eternal glory; so we may reasonably believe, that the devil's disciples, followers, subjects, soldiers in his army, his children, instruments and ministers of his kingdom, should have their part with him, and not that such an infinite difference should be made between them, that the punishment of the one should be eternal, and that of the other but temporal, and therefore infinitely less, infinitely disproportionate; so that the proportion between the punishment of the latter, and that of the former, is as nothing, infinitely less than an unit to a million of millions. This is unreasonable to be supposed in itself, as the difference of guilt and wickedness cannot be so great, but must be infinitely far from it; especially, considering the aggravations of the wickedness of a great part of damned men, as committed against Christ, and gospel grace and love; which exceeding great aggravation the sin of the devils never had.

§ 28. As the devil's ministers, servants and instruments, of the angelic nature, those that are called the devil's angels, shall have their part with him; for the like reason we may well suppose, his servants, and instruments of the human nature, will share with him. And not only is this reasonable in itself, but the Scripture plainly teaches us that it shall be so. In Rev. xix. 20, it is said, "The beast and the false prophet were both cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. So it is said, chap. xx. 16. "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;"—thus expressing both the kind of misery and the duration. Just in the same manner it is said concerning the followers of the beast. It is said, chap. xiv. 9, 10, 11. "Saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast, &c. —the same shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."—And chap. xxi. 8. of wicked men in general, it is said, they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.—So we find in Christ's description of the day of judgment, the wicked are sentenced to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. By which it appears most plainly, that they share with the devils in suffering misery of the same kind, and also share with him in suffering misery of the same everlasting continuance. And, indeed, not only would the punishment infinitely differ as to quantity and duration, if the punishment of the devils was to be eternal, and of wicked men only temporal: but if this were known, it would, as it were, infinitely differ in kind. The one suffering God's hatred and mere vengeance, inflictions that have no pity or kindness in them; the other, the fruit of his mercy and love, and infinitely kind intention: the one attended with absolute despair, and a black and dismal sinking prospect of misery, absolutely endless; the other with the light of hope, and a supporting prospect, not only of an end to their misery, but of an eternal unspeakable happiness to follow. According to the notion which I am opposing, the judgment that shall take place at the end of the world, will be so far from being the last judgment, or any proper judgment to settle all things in their final state, that it will, with respect to the wicked, be no more than the judgmnt of a physician, whether more sharp and powerful remedies must not be applied in order to the relief of sinners and the cure of their disease, which, if not cured, will make them eternally miserable!

§ 29. It is evident, that the future misery of the wicked in hell is not to come to an end, and to be succeeded by eternal happiness; and that their misery is not subservient to their happiness, because the Scripture plainly signifies, concerning

those that die in their sins, that they have all the good and comfort in *this life*, that ever is designed for them. Luke vi. 24. "Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy *lifetime* receivedst thy good things." Psal. xvii. 13, 14. "Deliver my soul from the wicked—from the men of the world which have their portion in *this life*, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure."

§ 30. According to the opinion I am now opposing, God will surely at the last deliver all the damned from their misery, and make them happy. So that God will see to it, that the purifying torments shall certainly at last have their effect, to turn them from sin. Now, how can this consist with God's treating them as moral agents, and their acting from the freedom of their own wills, in the affair of their turning from sin, and becoming morally pure and virtuous, according to the notions of freedom and moral agency which now prevail, and are strenuously maintained by some of the chief assertors of this opinion concerning hell torments; which notion of freedom implies contingence, and is wholly inconsistent with the necessity of the event? If after all the torments used to bring sinners to repentance, the consequence aimed at, *viz.* their turning from sin to virtue, be not necessary, but it shall still remain a contingent event, whether there ever will be any such consequence of those severe, long-continued chastisements or no; then, how can it be determined, that this will surely be the consequence? How can it be a thing infallible, that such a consequence of means used will follow, when at the same time, it is not a consequence any way necessarily connected with the means used, it being only a thing contingent whether it will follow or not? If God has determined absolutely to make them all pure and happy, and yet their purity and happiness depend on the freedom of their will; then here is an absolute, divine decree, consistent with the freedom of men's will, which is a doctrine utterly rejected by the generality of that sort of men who deny the eternity of hell torments. If it be said, that God has not absolutely determined the duration or measure of their torments, but intends to continue them till they do repent, or to try lesser torments first, and, if these do not answer, to increase them till they are effectual, determining that he will raise or continue them till the effect shall finally and infallibly follow; that is the same thing as to necessitate the effect. And here is necessity in such a case, as much as when a founder puts a piece of metal into a furnace, with a resolution to melt it, and if continuing it there a little while will not dissolve it, that he will keep it there till it does dissolve: and if, by reason of its peculiar hardness, an ordinary degree of heat of the furnace

will not be effectual, that he will increase the vehemence of the heat, till the effect shall certainly follow.

§ 31. If any should maintain this scheme of temporary future punishments, *viz.* that the torments in hell are not purifying pains, and that the damned are not in a state of trial with regard to any expected admission to eternal happiness, and that therefore they are not the proper objects of divine benevolence; that the dispensation they are under, is not truly a dispensation of mercy, but that their torments are properly penal pains, wherein God displays his vindictive justice; that they shall suffer misery to such a degree, and for so long a time, as their obstinate wickedness in this world *deserves;* and that indeed they shall be miserable a very long time, so long that it is often figuratively spoken of in Scripture as being everlasting, and that then they shall be annihilated: On this I would observe, that there is nothing got by such a scheme; no relief from the arguments taken from Scripture, for the proper eternity of future punishment. For, if it be owned, that Scripture expressions denote a punishment that is properly eternal, but that it is in no other sense properly so, than as the annihilation, or state of non-existence to which the wicked shall return, will be eternal; and that this eternal annihilation is that death which is so often threatened for sin, *perishing for ever*, *everlasting destruction*, being lost, utterly consumed, &c.; and that the fire of hell is called eternal fire, in the same sense that the external fire which consumed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is called eternal fire, (Jude 7.) because it utterly consumed those cities, that they might never be built more; and that this fire is called that which cannot be quenched, or at least not until it has destroyed them that are cast into it. If this be all that these expressions denote, then they do not at all signify the length of the torments, or long continuance of their misery; so that the supposition of the length of their torments is brought in without any necessity, the Scripture saying nothing of it, having no respect to it, when it speaks of their everlasting punishments: and it answers the Scripture expressions as well, to suppose that they shall be annihilated immediately, without any long pains, provided the annihilation be everlasting.

§ 32. If any should suppose, that the torments of the damned in hell are properly penal, and in execution of penal justice, but yet that they are neither eternal, nor shall end in annihilation, but shall be continued till justice is satisfied, and they have truly suffered as much as they deserve, whereby their punishment shall be so long as to be called everlasting, but that then they shall be delivered, and finally be the subjects of everlasting happiness; and that therefore they shall not in the mean-time be in a state of trial, nor will be waited upon in order to repent-

ance, nor will their torments be used as means to bring them to it; for that the term and measure of their punishment shall be fixed, from which they shall not be delivered on repentance, or any terms or conditions whatsoever, until justice is satisfied: I would observe in answer to this, that if it be so, the damned, while under their suffering, are either answerable for the wickedness that is acted by them while in that state, or may properly be the subjects of a judicial proceeding for it, or not. If the former be supposed, then it will follow, that they must have another state of suffering and punishment, after the ages of their suffering for the sins of this life are ended. And it cannot be supposed, that this second period of suffering will be shorter than the first: For the first is only for the sins committed during a short life, often represented in Scripture for its shortness, to be a dream, a tale that is told, a blast of wind, a vapour, a span, a moment, &c. But the time of punishment is always represented as exceeding long, called everlasting; represented as enduring for ever and ever, as having no end, &c. If the sins of a moment must be followed with such punishment, then, doubtless the sins of those endless ages, must be followed with another second period of suffering, much longer. For it must be supposed, that the damned continue sinning all the time of their punishment; for none can rationally imagine, that God would hold them under such extreme torments, and terrible manifestations and executions of his wrath, after they have thoroughly repented, and turned from sin, and are become pure and holy, and conformed to God, and so have left off sinning. And if they continue in sin, during this state of punishment, with assurance that God still has a great benevolence for them, even so as to intend finally to make them everlastingly happy in the enjoyment of his love, then their sin must be attended with great aggravation; as they will have the evil and ill desert of sin set before them in the most affecting manner, in their dreadful sufferings for it, attended besides with evidence that God is infinitely benevolent towards them, and intends to bestow infinite blessings upon them.—But, if this first long period of punishment must be followed with a second as long, or longer; for the same reason, the second must be followed by a third, as long or longer than that; and so the third must be followed by a fourth, and so *in infinitum;* and, at this rate, there never can be an end of their misery. So this scheme overthrows itself.

§ 39. And if the damned are not answerable for the wickedness they commit during their state of punishment, then we must suppose that, during the whole of their long, and, as it were, eternal state of punishment, they are given up of God to the most unrestrained wickedness, having this to consider, that how far soever they go in the allowed exercises and manifesta-

tions of their malice and rage against God and Christ, saints and angels, and their fellow damned spirits, they have nothing to fear from it, it will be never the worse; and surely, continuing in such unrestrained wickedness, for such duration, must most desperately confirm the habit of sin, must increase the root and fountain of it in the heart. Now, how unreasonable is it to suppose that God would thus deal with such as were objects of his infinite kindness, and the appointed subjects of the unspeakable and endless fruits of his love, in a state of perfect holiness and purity, and conformity to and union with himself; thus to give them up beforehand to unrestrained malignity against himself, and every kind of hellish wickedness, as it were infinitely to increase the fountain of sin in the heart, and the strength of the principle and habit? Now, how incongruous is it to suppose, with regard to those for whom God has great benevolence, and designs eternal favour, that he would lay them under a necessity of extreme unbounded hatred of him, blasphemy and rage against him, for so many ages; such necessity as should exclude all liberty of their own in the case? If God intends not only punishment, but purification by these torments; on this supposition, instead of their being purified, they must be set at an infinitely greater distance from purification. And if God intends them for a second time of probation, in order to their being brought to repentance and the love of God after their punishment is finished; then how can it be certain beforehand, that they shall finally be happy, as is supposed? How can it be certain they will not fail, in their second trial, or in their third, if there be a third? Yea, how much more likely, that they will fail of truly turning in heart from sin to the love of God, in their second trial, if there be any proper trial in the case, after their hearts have been so much more brought under the power of a strong habit of sin and enmity to God? If the habit proved so strong in this life, that the most powerful means and mighty inducements of the gospel would not prevail, so that God was, as it were, under a necessity of cutting them down and dealing thus severely with them; how much less likely will it be, that they will be prevailed upon to love God and the ways of virtue, after their hearts are set at so much greater distance from those things? Yea, unless we suppose a divine interposition of almighty, efficacious power, to change the heart in the time of this second trial, we may be sure that, under these circumstances, the heart will not turn to love God.

§ 34. And besides, if they are laid under such a necessity of hating and blaspheming God, for so many ages, in the manner that has been spoken of, how extremely incongruous is such an imagination, that God would lay those he intended for the eternal bounty and blessedness of dear children, under such circumstances, that they must necessarily hate him, and with

devilish fury curse and blaspheme him for innumerable ages, and yet never have cause, even when they are delivered and made happy in God's love, to condemn themselves for it, though they see the infinite hatefulness and unreasonableness of it, because God laid them under such a necessity, that they could use no liberty of their own in the case? I leave it for all to judge, whether God's thus ordering things, with regard to such as, from great benevolence, he intended for eternal happiness in a most blessed union with himself, be credible.

§ 35. The same disposition and habit of mind, and manner of viewing things, is indeed the main ground of the cavils of many of the modern free-thinkers; and modish writers, against the extremity and eternity of hell torments, if relied upon, would cause them to be dissatisfied with almost any thing that is very uncomfortable in a future punishment, so much as the enduring of the pain that is occasioned by the thrusting of a thorn under the nail of the finger, for a whole year together, day and night, without any rest or the least intermission or abatement. There are innumerable calamities that come to pass in this world, through the permission and ordination of divine providence, against which (were it not that they are what we see with our eyes, and are universally known and incontestable facts,) this cavilling, unbelieving spirit, would strongly object: and, if they were only proposed in theory, as matters of faith, would be opposed as exceedingly inconsistent with the moral perfections of God; and the opinions of such as asserted them would be cried out against, as in numberless ways contrary to God's wisdom, his justice, goodness, mercy, &c; such as, the innumerable calamities that have happened to poor innocent children, through the merciless cruelty of barbarous enemies; their being gradually roasted to death, shrieking and crying for their fathers and mothers; the extreme pains they sometimes are tormented with, by terrible diseases which they suffer; the calamities that have many times been brought on whole cities, while besieged, and when taken by merciless soldiers, destroying all men, women, and children, without any pity; the extreme miseries which have been suffered by millions of innocent persons, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, in times of persecution, when there has been no refuge to be found on earth; yea, those things that come to pass universally, of which all mankind are the subjects, in temporal death, which is so dreadful to nature.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE DIVINE DECREES IN GENERAL, AND ELECTION IN PARTICULAR.

§ 1. WHETHER God has decreed all things that ever came to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that he *knows* all things *beforehand.* Now, it is self-evident, that if he knows all things beforehand, he either doth *approve* of them, or he doth *not* approve of them; that is, he either is *willing* they should be, or he is not willing they should be. But to *will* that they should be, is to *decree them.**

* Were the true ORIGIN *of moral evil*, that is, the *adequate reason* of its taking place as a consequence, more generally known, there would be less unprofitable disputing about the divine decrees in general, and about predestination and election in particular. It is to the want of this knowledge, that we must ascribe many things advanced by ancient as well as modern writers, who, in other important respects, are truly valuable and judicious. Our excellent author appears never less at home, than when he touches upon those points which are immediately connected with that knowledge; and his reasoning in the short section to which this note refers, is a striking specimen. The conclusion he draws, is true in one sense, but not in another. It is applicable only to real entities, while it does not affect negative causations, and consequences flowing from them. That God "knows beforehand" all things, (whether of a positive or negative kind,) is an important truth; but things coming to pass, or not coming to pass, is no proper criterion of his "approving" or "not approving them." He may *approve* of what does *not* come to pass, and he may *not* approve of what *does*. He approves of all *possible* excellencies, and he disapproves of all *possible* moral evil. But who will say that there are as many excellencies among creatures, or as much moral evil, as it is *possible* there might be?

When it is said, "he either is willing they should be, or he is not willing they should be," the terms require a distinction, and the sentiment an explanation. If by "they," or "things," be meant *real entities*, it is very proper to say, that "God is either *willing* they should be, or *not* willing they should be;" and, if the *former*, they must exist from his will, and, therefore, are decreed; but, if the *latter*, they must not exist, for there is no other adequate cause of their existence. But this reasoning is not valid when applied to negations and defects. For there are multitudes of things, (as all failings, wants, and negative considerations,) concerning which there is no decretive will exercised for their existence, (if existence it may be called,) nor yet any contrary will to prevent their existence. What intelligent person can suppose, for instance, that a mathematical point, *a relative nothing*, was *decreed* either to be, or not to be? and yet, when it stands *related* to *real entities*, which are decreed, what innumerable demonstrative consequences follow from it?

By whomsoever sanctioned, it is an erroneous notion, that a decretive *will* is implied in, or is at all requisite for the production of a negative cause. It is not less erroneous, than to suppose, that negative causes may produce real entities. That the latter is an erroneous notion, may be easily made to appear. Millions of inhabited systems are among *possible* effects. but who would say that there must be a decretive will, or any will, to prevent their existence?—

§ 2. The Arminians ridicule the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, or, more properly expressed, the distinction between the decree and law of God; because

Would they start into being of themselves, if not prevented by an act of will?—To suppose that an exercise of divine will is requisite for confirming the negative consideration of their non-existence, is an absurd idea, except these ideal possibles had an inherent tendency towards actual existence of themselves. And, as there is no will requisite to *prevent* their existence, so neither is there any required to *continue* their non-existence. But though a negative cause, like a mathematical point, be a relative nothing, yet on the supposition of existing free agents, in given circumstances, millions of sins would come to pass, more than do in fact, were they not prevented by a counteracting will. This counteraction is very properly termed "restraining, or preventing grace;" for the object of a decree which counteracts evil, is the *positive* existence of an opposite good. And, if moral evil be the object of prevention, it must be prevented by divine gracious will and influence, which counteracts the operation of that negative principle in the agent, from which the moral evil takes its origin.—Therefore, our author's conclusion, "to will that they should be, is to decree them," applies only to *one sort* of "things," *viz.* real entities; but negative considerations, defects, and moral evils, no more imply a decree concerning their causation, and their appropriate consequences, than does absolute non-existence imply it.

The true notion of moral evil, or the *sinfulness* of a free act, is the *absence* or the *want* of conformity to rectitude. And if God were the decretive cause of moral evil, by "willing it should be," the will of the agent would be only the instrument of the first will in producing an intended or decreed event. But if such event be decreed, and if there be no cause of failure in the agent but what is decreed, it is impossible to avoid the consequence that God is the primary author of sin. And how could he *hate* and *blame* the effect of his own causation, any more than he hates natural evils, or blames volcanoes and storms, diseases and death? He is never said, or even supposed, to hate or blame these, because he is the primary source of them, according to established laws and instruments of his own appointment. If moral evil were *decreed* by him, he must be the *efficient* of it: for, whatever he *decrees*, he *effects;* and, notwithstanding any kind, whatever, of instrumentality in its production—the human will or any thing else—he could no more disapprove of it, than he does of lightning and earthquakes.

But if "willing they should be" denote, *not exercising* a will to prevent moral evils, the expression is inappropriate, and implies a contradiction. For a decree implies the *exercise* of will; but *not exercising* a preventing will (by which alone the event can be arrested,) is an idea directly contrary; and the two ideas are absolutely incompatible. The same intelligent cause, indeed, may produce effects *different* from itself; and this *must* be the case, as cause and effect cannot be *identified*, (for *identity* is that which *excludes difference*,) but the same intelligent cause cannot produce effects *contrary* to itself. All the decrees of God are *holy*, like himself; but to suppose a decree of moral evil, is to suppose an effect *contrary* to its cause, which is to suppose incompatible ideas to be a truth. The intervention of a *secondary* will make no real difference, if there be not *another* cause of failure in the act, totally different from decretive will.

But is there any adequate cause, or *sufficient reason*, of the consequence, why moral evil takes place, if we exclude a divine decree of it? Most assuredly there is; as sure as all the decrees of God, and the exercise of those decrees, are holy; and, as sure as moral evil is an effect which he blames and infinitely hates. And this cause is of such a nature, that if God decrees *one kind* of good, but not *another* also, moral evil is certain to follow. That is, if he decree the existence of an active will, in perfect liberty from constraint to evil, together with a variety of objects, all of which are good in themselves; but at the same time, has *not decreed* preserving grace—a continued, holy influence, enlightening

we say he may decree one thing, and command another. And so, they argue, we hold a contrariety in God, as if one will of his contradicted another. However, if they will call this a

and purifying the mind—the intellect will be *certain*, (as *chance* is out of the question,) to give a defective representation of good, because it is necessarily connected with the source of failure, *viz* comparative defect, and, therefore, the want of infallibility. If the choice be *right* and virtuous, it is the infallible index of two good things decreed, the natural act, and a holy principle in the *heart*, which is the source of moral actions. If the choice be *wrong* and vicious, it is, also, an infallible index of two things, the natural act which is good, and, therefore, decreed, and a principle of limitation and failure, which neither is, nor can be, an object of decree. This negative principle in *fallen* angels and men, is intimately connected and intermixed with moral depravity, yet in itself, abstractedly considered, it is not sinful, but is the cause of all sinfulness It is an essential property of creatures in every state of their existence, and, therefore, cannot be in itself sinful; nor is it possible for any thing *sinful*, to be the *origin* of sin, for then sin would be the origin of itself, or self-existent, which is infinitely absurd. How can the same thing be both *before* and *after* itself?

Here it may be asked, if the *origin* of moral evil be not itself sinful, why may not God be its origin? The reason is plain, because God is absolute perfection, and has not in him a principle of defection, and therefore it is impossible for him to impart what he has not. He can no more impart *imperfection*, than he can impart *falsehood*. Why is he a God that cannot lie? Because he is absolute truth. Why cannot he impart imperfection, or decree sinfulness? Because he is absolute goodness and holiness. But though that principle which is the *origin* of sin is not sinful, it is not a perfection, in any sense, but a *relative defect*. This is its real character, and such character must necessarily be the *origin* of moral evil. Were it sinful, it could not be the *cause* of sin, for this would be absurdly to identify the cause and the effect, or to ascribe to imperfection, the perfection of self existence. And were it a perfection, or something that was not an imperfection, the effect would be *contrary* to the tendency of its cause, which would be to subvert the first principles of knowledge, reason, and truth.

Moral evil, which is the sinfulness of a free act, is a *defect*, a *failure* of conformity to rectitude, and therefore, though a source of misery to the subject of it, (a misery generated by the defect itself,) it can no more be *caused* by the divine will, than pure nihility, or a mathematical point, can be so caused. The *entity* of the free act is indeed effected by divine will and energy, operating on a secondary cause, but this constitutes no part of its defect, its failure of conformity, or *sinfulness*. Thus the very *nature* of sin proves that the divine will neither is, nor can possibly be, the cause of it. To suppose that God decrees, or any way wills a *defect*, or a failure of perfection of any kind, is even more absurd than to suppose that he decrees mere nihility; because it involves more absurd consequences, when compared with his declared *opposition* to sin. Though he counteracts nihility by actual creation, and providential preservation, it is no object of blame, or holy hatred, as moral evil is.

As the point under discussion, though deep, is far from being a mere speculation which has no practical advantage—but has an extensive influence on many important theological subjects, and on the rational ground of experimental religion—it may be advantageous to view it in different lights. Still, it may be asked by some, if moral evil does not take place because "God wills it should be," whence does it originate? It may be replied, its *immediate* origination is a moral agent's *abuse* of his free will, or of his will acting freely, without restraint from good, or constraint to evil. But the question still returns, What is the *ultimate cause* of that *abuse?* Every one must allow, that, as an effect, it must have *some* cause, some adequate reason *why* it takes place in a moral system; and it must be further allowed, that this cannot be *chance*, or absolute contingence, for then there would be no ground of its being foreknown. To foreknow what is *in itself* uncertain, is a direct contradiction; and a contradictory position cannot be an object of *foreknowledge*,

contradiction of wills, we know that there is such a thing: so that it is the greatest absurdity to dispute about it. We and they know it was God's secret will, that Abraham should not

because it cannot be an object of *any* knowledge, except as a falsehood. To attempt an evasion of this argument, by recurring to the *infinitude* of the divine knowledge, is a weak subterfuge; for, if any thing be *in itself uncertain*, the more perfect the knowledge is, the more perfectly it is known to be *uncertain*. What is contingent with respect to us, is only *relatively* so, because our knowledge is *limited;* but with respect to God, whose understanding is infinite, there is *nothing* contingent; that is, there is no *absolute* contingence, or mere chance, in the nature of things. There must, therefore, of necessity, be an origin of moral evil, which is certainly foreknown, or foreknown as a certain fact. And it has been proved that it is not, and that it cannot possibly be, divinely caused; it must, therefore, originate in the creature, and in something of which he is the subject, which is not an object of divine causation.

It may still be objected, Is there any thing in a creature, as such, which is not divinely caused? If, by "thing," be meant, what has positive existence, there certainly is not; but, in another sense, there certainly is, otherwise there would be a creature without any *relative defect*, compared with the Creator. If he has no defect or imperfection of *any* kind, then the Creator and the creature must necessarily be *identified*. For what can constitute the *difference* between a caused and an uncaused being, if not the absolute perfection of the latter, and the comparative imperfection of the former? And this comparative imperfection cannot be *sinful*, otherwise there could be no creature without sin, which is absurd in thought, and contrary to revealed facts. This relative defect, which constitutes an essential difference between a derived and an underived existence, is an adequate (and indeed the only possible) origin of moral evil; but it is, however, only *hypothetical*, that is, on supposition, that there is no decreed operation of a contrary principle, to prevent the occurrence of moral evil as a consequence. And there can be no doubt, that God actually does, in millions of instances, "overcome this evil with good," in preventing the inhabitants of this world from being worse than they are. That interrogation, "Who hath made thee to differ from another?" is full of important meaning. It implies a strong affirmation, that *God alone* makes any man to *differ for the better* from another, and that no one has *any excellency*, either natural or spiritual, but what is a divine gift. But, on the other hand, the *agent alone* makes himself to *differ for the worse*, whether from others, or from his former self, otherwise he could not be the object of divine displeasure and blame. It is not, however, the *cause* of sin that is the object of blame and displeasure in the exercise of holy government, but the *sin* itself, and the person who commits it.

It is of little moment, by what words, or in what language, this essential principle is expressed: whether by *passive power*, (perhaps the most significant and convenient as a technical term,) comparative imperfection, the evil of imperfect existence, metaphysical evil, the want of ulterior perfection, an essential tendency to defection, &c.; the thing itself, as possessing a *relative* influence in the demonstrations of moral science, is absolutely certain. If we reject it, nothing in *morality* can possibly be the subject of scientific demonstration, any more than in geometry, any proposition can be demonstrated if we reject that *relative nothing*, a *mathematical point*, which is implied in every diagram. But, if we admit it, there is nothing important in *moral science* but is capable of being reduced to rigid and fair demonstration. It should, however, be carefully remembered, that though it is an adequate reason of the event, and is the only ultimate origin of moral evil as the consequence, it is suspended on this condition, "If the all-sufficient first cause do not communicate to the agent's mind a supporting holy influence." *Grant the agent* (that is, a *created*, and, therefore, a *dependant* agent,) *active powers and freedom*, (that is, freedom from decretive constraint to an evil choice, and from restraint as to a good choice,) *and nothing but sovereign or arbitrary goodness can, in the na-*

sacrifice his son Isaac; but yet his command was, that he should do it.

§ 3. It is most certain, that if there are any things so contingent, that there is an equal possibility of their being, or not being, so that they may be, or they may not be; God foreknows, from all eternity, that they may be, and also, that they may not be. All will grant, that we need no revelation to teach us this. And furthermore, if God knows all things that are to come to pass, he also foreknows whether those contingent things are to come to pass or no, at the same time that they are contingent, and that they may, or may not come to pass. But what a contradiction is it to say, that God knows a thing will come to pass, and yet at the same time knows that it is contingent whether it will come to pass or no; that is, he certainly knows it will come to pass, and yet certainly knows it may not come to pass? What a contradiction is it to say, that God certainly foreknew that Judas would betray his master, or Peter deny him, and yet certainly knew that it might be otherwise, or certainly knew that he might be deceived? I

ture of things, (that is, in the nature of God and of the creature.) *prevent the consequence, moral evil.* What an argument for godly fear, profound humility, and constant dependence on God all-sufficient; and what a proof of our need of gracious influence, (even abstracted from the additional consideration of our sinful apostacy,) to keep us from sin; and considered as apostate creatures, what a powerful recommendation of a life of prayer, and the gospel system of salvation!

COROLLARIES.

1. Hence we may see that a decree of *good* does not imply a decree of *evil*—predestination to *life*, does not imply predestination to *death*—in other words, that a decree of *election*, does not imply a decree of *reprobation*, as maintained by some of the reformers. The 17th article of the church of England steers clear of this dangerous rock.

2. Since all the disputes between Calvinists and Arminians, are founded in differing notions about the divine *decrees* and *free will*, and since these differing notions are thoroughly removed by a right knowledge of the origin of moral evil, which is capable of demonstrative evidence—we may infer, that in proportion as Calvinists and Arminians are capable of estimating absolute demonstration, their disagreement will be annihilated—and that nothing but ignorance and prejudice can prevent their harmonious coalition. O happy period, when all God's people shall "see eye to eye!"—Let the Calvinist, from full conviction, assure his opponent, that God decrees *only good*, whether natural, moral, or spiritual; but in no sense, whatever, decrees, or any way wills moral evil—let him further state, that the origin, or cause of moral evil, is in the creature in such a manner, as to be neither created nor willed by the author of our being, but yet is inseparably *related* to our existence—and let him further insist, that God could, if he saw it best, prevent by his grace the commission of sin, in every possible instance, while he leaves the human will perfectly free—and that to him alone we should look for assistance to enable us to avoid sin, as well as for pardon and acceptance—firmly persuaded of these things, on the clearest ground of evidence, let him invite his opponent to give him the right hand of fellowship—if, after all, the Arminian draws back, he must, in the view of every intelligent mind, appear either profoundly ignorant, or most unreasonably bigotted. In this case, though not blameless, he should be the subject of pity and of prayer.—W.

suppose it will be acknowledged by all, that for God certainly to know a thing will be, and yet certainly to know that it may not be, is the same thing as certainly to know that he may be deceived. I suppose it will also be acknowledged, that certainly to know a thing, and, also, at the same time, to know that we may be deceived in it, is the same thing as certainly to know it, and certainly to know that we are uncertain of it, or that we certainly do not know it: and that is the same thing as certainly to know it, and not certainly to know it at the same time; which we leave to be considered, whether it be not a contradiction.

§ 4. The meaning of the word *absolute*, when used about the decrees, wants to be stated. It is commonly said, God decrees nothing upon a foresight of any thing in the creature: as this, they say, argues imperfection in God; and so it does, taken in the sense that they commonly intend it. But nobody, I believe, will deny that God decrees many things that he would not have decreed, if he had not foreknown and foredetermined such and such other things. What we mean, we completely express thus—That God decrees all things harmoniously, and in excellent order, one thing harmonizes with another, and there is such a relation between all the decrees, as makes the most excellent order. Thus God decrees rain in drought, and he also decrees the earnest prayers of his people, because he decrees rain. I acknowledge, to say, *God decrees a thing because*, is an improper way of speaking; but not more improper than all our other ways of speaking about God. God decrees the latter event, because of the former, no more than he decrees the former, because of the latter. But this is what we mean:—When God decrees to give the blessing of rain, he decrees the prayers of his people; and, when he decrees the prayers of his people for rain, he very commonly decrees rain; and, thereby, there is an harmony between these two decrees, of rain, and the prayers of God's people. Thus, also, when he decrees diligence and industry, he decrees riches and prosperity; when he decrees prudence, he often decrees success; when he decrees striving, then he often decrees the obtaining the kingdom of heaven; when he decrees the preaching of the gospel, then he decrees the bringing home of souls to Christ; when he decrees good natural faculties, diligence, and good advantages, then he decrees learning; when he decrees summer, then he decrees the growing plants; when he decrees conformity to his Son, then he decrees calling; when he decrees calling, then he decrees justification; and when he decrees justification, then he decrees everlasting glory. Thus, all the decrees of God are harmonious; and this is all that can be said for or against absolute or conditional decrees. But this I say, it is as impro-

per to make one decree a condition of another, as to make the other a condition of that: but there is an harmony between both.

§ 5. As to such an absolute contingency, which they attribute to man's will, calling it the sovereignty of the will; if they mean by this sovereignty of will, that a man can will as he wills, it is perfect nonsense, and the same as if they should spend abundance of time and pains, and be very hot at proving, that a man can will what he doth will; that is, that it is possible for that to be, which is. But if they mean, that there is a perfect contingency in the will of man, that is, that it happens merely by chance that a man wills such a thing, and not another, it is an impossibility and contradiction, that a thing should be without any cause or reason, and when there was every way as much cause why it should not have been.

§ 6. Contingency, as it is holden by some, is at the same time contradicted by themselves, if they hold foreknowledge. This is all that follows from an absolute, unconditional, irreversible decree, that it is impossible but that the things decreed should be. The same exactly follows from foreknowledge, that it is absolutely impossible but that the thing certainly foreknown should precisely come to pass.

§ 7. They say, to what purpose are praying and striving, and attending on means, if all was irreversibly determined by God before? But, to say that all was determined before these prayers and strivings, is a very wrong way of speaking, and begets those ideas in the mind, which correspond with no realities with respect to God. The decrees of our everlasting state were not before those of our prayers and strivings; for these are as much present with God from all eternity, as they are the moment they are present with us. They are present as part of his decrees, or rather as the same; and they did as really exist in eternity with respect to God, as they exist in time, and as much at one time as another. Therefore, we can no more fairly argue, that these will be in vain, because God has foredetermined all things, than we can that they would be in vain if they existed as soon as the decree, for so they do, inasmuch as they are a part of it.

§ 8. When a distinction is made between God's revealed will and his secret will, or his will of command and decree, *will* is certainly in that distinction taken in two senses. His will of decree is not his will in the same sense as his will of command is. Therefore, it is no difficulty at all to suppose, that the one may be otherwise than the other. His will in both senses is in his inclination. But when we say he wills virtue, or loves virtue, or the happiness of his creature; thereby is intended, that virtue, or the creature's happiness, absolutely and simply considered, is agreeably to the inclination of

his nature. His will of decree is his inclination to a thing, not as to that thing absolutely and simply, but with respect to the universality of things, that have been, are, or shall be. So God, though he has no inclination to a creature's misery, considered absolutely, yet he may will it for the greater promotion of happiness in this universality. God inclines to excellency, which is harmony, but yet he may suffer that which is inharmonious in itself, for the promotion of the harmony there is in the universality of his glorious works. And thus it must needs be, and no hypothesis whatever will relieve a man, but that he must own these two wills of God.

§ 9. It is a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth; and, for the same reason, it is proper that the shining forth of God's glory should be complete: that is, that all parts of his glory should shine forth, that every beauty should be proportionably effulgent; that the beholder may have a proper notion of God. It is not proper, that one glory should be exceedingly manifested, and another not at all; for then the effulgence would not answer the reality. For the same reason, it is not proper that one should be manifested exceedingly, and another but very little. It is highly proper, that the effulgent glory of God should answer his real excellency; that the splendour should be answerable to the real and essential glory; for the same reason that it is proper and excellent for God to glorify himself at all. Thus it is necessary, that God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice and holiness, should be manifested. But this could not be, unless punishment had been decreed; so that the shining forth of God's glory would be very imperfect, both because these parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the others do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all. If it were not right that God should permit and punish sin, there could be no manifestation of God's holiness in hatred of sin, or in showing any preference, in his providence, of godliness before it. There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. How much happiness soever he bestowed, his goodness would not be so much prized and admired, and the sense of it not so great. We little consider, how much the sense of good is heightened by the sense of evil, both moral and natural. And as it is necessary that there should be evil, because the display of the glory of God could not but be imperfect and incomplete without it, so evil is necessary, in order to the highest happiness of the creature, and the completeness of that communication of God, for which he made the world: because the creature's happiness consists in the knowledge of God, and a sense of his love. And if the knowledge of him be

imperfect, the happiness of the creature must be proportionably imperfect: and the happiness of the creature would be imperfect upon another account also: for as we have said, the sense of good is comparatively dull and flat, without the knowledge of evil.

§ 10. I lay this down, which I suppose none will deny, that as to God's own actions, God decrees them, or purposes them beforehand. For none will be so absurd as to say, that God acts without intentions, or without designing to act, or that he forbears to act, without intending to forbear. And whatsoever God intends or purposes, he intends and purposes from all eternity; as there are no new purposes or intentions in God. For, if God sometimes begins to intend what he did not intend before, then two things will follow:

1. That God is not omniscient. If God sometimes begins to design what he did not design before, it must of necessity be for want of knowledge, or for want of knowing things before, as he knows them now; for want of having exactly the same views of things. If God begins to intend what he did not before intend, it must be because he now sees reasons to intend it, that he did not see before; or that he has something new objected to his understanding, to influence him.

2. If God begins to intend or purpose things that he did not intend before, then God is certainly mutable, and then he must in his own mind and will be liable to succession and change; for, wherever there are new things, there is succession and change. Therefore, I shall take these two things for positions granted and supposed in this controversy.

§ 11. "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psalm lxxvi. 10. If God restrains sin when he pleases; and when he permits it, permits it for the sake of some good that it will be an occasion of, and does actually restrain it in all other cases; it is evident that when he permits it, it is for the sake of the good of which it will be an occasion. If he permits it for the sake of that good, then he does not permit merely because he would infringe on the creature's liberty in restraining it; as is further evident, because he does restrain it when that good is not in view. If God *wills to permit* a thing that it may come to pass, then he wills that it should come to pass.*

* This phrase, "to will to permit," could never have obtained currency among either moral, theological, or metaphysical writers, had they duly considered the subject of *negative causality*—its peculiar *nature*, its *relation* to what is positive, and its appropriate *consequences*. By "causality," is meant, an *adequate reason* for a certain (as opposed to a mere probable) consequence; which causality, it is maintained, may be *negative* as well as positive, *passive* as well as active. A positive and active causation must be from the first cause, but not that which is negative and passive. That the latter is connected with consequences, which are infallibly certain, will be shown in the course of this

§ 12. God foresaw who would comply with the terms of salvation, and who would not; and he could have forborn to give being to such as he foresaw would not comply. Objectors

note, which is intended to vindicate the divine character and government from undeserved imputations.

The word "permit," must either include an act of the will, or not include it: if the former, to will to permit, must be "to will to *will*" something, or to will some act of the will. If it be said, that the phrase means, a will, in general, to exercise some *other* will, in particular; it is replied, that this does not constitute any difference of will, except as one thing is subservient to another in the series of decrees. But a little consideration will show the impropriety of applying the word in this manner. The divine decrees must necessarily be either direct, or indirect, as there is no medium: and the former must be of those objects which are excellent for their own sake, but the latter must be made respecting objects for the sake of something else which is excellent. Nothing can be the object of a *direct* decree but what terminates in God, as well as emanates from him, in a direct manner, as goodness, holiness, truth, &c.; and nothing can be an object of an *indirect* decree, (as the creation of a material world, the appointment of its laws, &c.) but what terminates in him in an indirect manner, as subservient to the other. For "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" decreed by him. Thus far most are agreed.

But the word "permit," in reference to moral evil, cannot mean, in any consistency of language, or thought, even an indirect decree, or will; for it would involve a decree of *opposite* objects, and, thereby, contradictory causations. God decrees the holiness of his creatures in order to their happiness, and their happiness for his own glory. But, were we to say, that he decrees the creature's comparative defect, for the sake of his moral failure, and the latter for the sake of showing his own justice, he must, on that supposition, decree *opposite* things, and thereby put the stamp of approbation upon the evil as well as upon the good. To say, that sin is *willed for the sake* of good, does not mend the matter; for still, on the supposition, it would be *willed*, and, consequently, decreed, as a contrary object. That an inferior *good* should be willed in subserviency to another superior, is very just; and that the laws of nature, which are good, should be the *occasion* of harm to individuals, is not unworthy of the holy author of those laws; but moral evil stands *directly opposed* to his rectitude and infinitely holy nature.

According to the doctrine here controverted, God would be the fountain of good and evil alike; and he who commits a sin, may as justly ascribe it to God ultimately, as another may ascribe to him the goodness of his deeds. If the latter is called to exercise gratitude, the former is entitled to plead exculpation. Nor is it sufficient to say, that the sinner aims at an end, in transgressing, different from that which God aims at; for, on the hypothesis, his circumstances, without one exception, are decreed, from whence the sin arises, and, indeed, the very existence of sin must ultimately proceed from the divine will. But that the sinner should be *blamed* for doing what was decreed to be done, including his *defects*, (the ground of his fallibility,) whence proceed his wrong ends in sinning, is to subvert all proper ideas of justice, right and wrong, good and evil.

Some will allow that the difficulties which their hypothesis involves, are inexplicable, at least by our contracted minds in the present state; but yet hold, that we are forced to determine thus, in order to avoid still greater difficulties. For, say they, we must either adopt this plan, or deny God's foreknowledge. But this is a hasty and illegitimate inference; and which is owing, as before intimated, to the want of properly ascertaining the doctrine of negative causality. If this be overlooked, embarrassments will be sure to follow, nor can the most subtle penetration be of any avail to effect a disentanglement. This oversight is the cause why many anxious inquirers after truth have met with a mortifying disappointment, in endeavouring to reconcile what otherwise is demonstrably irreconcilable. And this is the reason why many have drawn back with disgust from a scene, with which, the more they viewed it, the more they were

may say, God cannot always prevent men's sins, unless he acts contrary to the free nature of the subject, or without destroying men's liberty. But will they deny, that an omnipotent and

perplexed. They neglected, or did not sufficiently perceive, the *only* principle by which the greatest difficulties in moral science may be satisfactorily explained, and by the aid of which some of the most important truths of revealed religion, which appeared to clash, may assume a beautiful consistency, and may be shown to be founded in eternal truth Faith indeed may live, and even triumph, without a scientific knowledge of his objects; but it may grow stronger, and triumph still more (*cæteris paribus*) in the front of daring opposition, or when insidiously attacked by the ' opposition of science, falsely so called," when possessed of demonstrative evidence of the harmony of divine perfections, and of truths which depend on that harmony. But, before we come to state and illustrate more particularly the principle in question, we must not lose sight of the other idea, included in the term " permit."

If the phrase " to will to *permit*" cannot mean " to will *to will*," or " to will to *decree*," an act of the will is *not included* in the term " permit." And this exclusion of an act of will, undoubtedly, enters into its only justifiable acceptation in reference to the present subject. To permit, is *not to hinder* what has, or appears to have, a tendency to take place. To *will* to hinder, to prevent, to oppose, to counteract, or to effect any thing, is strictly proper, when a contrary effect or tendency of any kind is implied But to will to hinder a dead man from walking is nonsense. When a person has an inclination, or a tendency of any kind, and when it is in the power of another to hinder its operation, but *does not hinder*, it is proper to say that he *permits* it; that is, he *does not will* the contrary. An exercise of *will* is both useless and unmeaning, when only to *permit* is intended; for the event is supposed to take place *if not prevented*. For one man to *permit* another to do a good or a bad action, when it is in his power to prevent it, is good sense; because it implies an inclination in the person permitted. But why is it improper to say, that God *permits* a man to do his duty? It is because he neither would nor could do it by mere permission. If permission implied an act of will, there would be no impropriety in a language which yet all allow to be absurd, *viz.* that God *permits* a man to be good! But to *permit evil* is good sense, and approved language. Why? Because no exercise of will, on the part of the permitter, is required; or, because it is implied that it would take place if not prevented. To *decree* the continued existence of the world in its present form for a given time, expresses a clear and consistent idea; but to say thatGod has decreed that he *will not* do the *contrary* during the same period, is unmeaning language. When a declaration is made, that God *will not* do a thing, as drowning the earth with another deluge, &c. the plain meaning is, that it expresses the *non-existence* of an *imagined* event. But the non-existence of an imagined event, no more implies a decree concerning it, than does the non-existence of other imagined worlds, or another fancied first cause. To *prevent* implies *will*, in counteracting the intended effect, but to *permit* is *not* to will the counteraction. Therefore, " to will to *permit*" is the same thing as " to will *not to will*," which, both in meaning and in language is alike indefensible. And when we say, that God permits moral evil, if we have any consistent meaning, it must intend, that he *does not will* to hinder it—except in a *legislative* sense—and if so, what possible room is there left for any exercise of *will* in permission? Infinite perfection forbids it. Man, indeed, may *determine not to do* a thing; but this must refer either to a *former intention* of *doing* that thing, which now is altered, or to some *expectation* of the contrary. But nothing of this kind can belong to God, who " is one mind."

Can any sin then take place without God's will and concurrence? It is replied; if by " sin" be meant the act of the sinner in its concrete form, the divine will and concurrence are implied. But we should remember that in every act, however morally evil, there is, and necessarily must be, a *natural good* included. The natural powers and energy of the mind are of that quality, proceeding from the divine will, and without which there could be no moral act either good or bad.

infinitely wise God could not possibly have influenced all mankind to continue in their obedience, as the elect angels have done, without destroying their liberty? God will order it so,

But the *sinfulness* of the act (which is often expressed by the shorter word *sin*) cannot possibly proceed except from some *defect*. which therefore must be a *negative* cause, and which no more needs the divine will for its production, than does mere nihility need it. The idea of perfection and of will, is positive; but that of imperfection and of permission is negative. And as perfection admits of degrees, considered as existing in creatures, so does the want of perfection. The former is the effect of divine will, but the latter needs no will, nor can admit any. Nay, for a creature to exist without *any want* of perfection, is the same as a self-sufficient creature, (for then alone could he be without imperfection,) which is infinitely absurd.

We may further observe, that if there were nothing good in an act concretively sinful, no evil could attach to such act; for what is moral evil, if not the perversion of that which is naturally good? If the natural powers and their acts, abstractedly considered, were not in themselves good, moral evil would be impossible. And were there no *negative* cause, or some kind of *defect* in the agent, all his acts would be *morally* as well as physically good, and that infallibly, as those of the absolutely perfect Being. In the Deity there is no defect of any kind, nor any negative cause of any effects or consequences; and therefore no *liability* to moral evil.

But how can we *conceive* of a negative cause, affording a demonstration of an ineffable consequence? Is there any thing *analogous* to it in the nature of things? And if there be, what *importance* can be attached to it? Let us coolly endeavour to furnish a reply to these questions. We can easily conceive of a *mathematical point*, and it is universally allowed that it has *no dimensions*—it has neither length, breadth, nor thickness—and therefore is a negative idea. It implies a *negation* of every thing that has positive existence It is therefore pure *nihility* under a *relative* consideration. But though in *itself* it is nothing positive, yet that nothing, when it stands *related* to a line which has positive length, becomes a source of innumerable demonstrations. For, if we take into the account, together with a point, a circumference of equal radii, we have the positive idea of a circle, composed of a centre and circumference. And without this relation subsisting between a relative nothing and a positive something, the idea of a circle is not possible; and consequently the ideas of the *properties* of a circle (which are innumerable) are absolute impossibilities. So nearly allied and so perfectly similar, are the very first principles of geometrical and metaphysical science. For, as without the negative idea of a mathematical point, (for points are the boundaries of lines,) constituting an adequate reason of an infallible consequence, not a single demonstration in geometry can be effected; so without the negative idea of passive power, as the opposite to that power which is active and positive, not one demonstration properly so called, can be effected in metaphysical and moral science. This may appear to some a bold assertion; but it is not more bold than true. He who would dispute the fact, may just as well dispute the truth of the very first definition in geometrical science, *viz.* that of a point. He may indeed raise objections, and plead that we can *see* a point. therefore it must have *some* dimensions; or, if it be *nothing*, it can be no cause, no adequate reason of any thing as a consequence, &c. but if he attempts seriously to vindicate his objection by argument, he cannot avoid showing himself perfectly ridiculous to those who understand the subject. And equally ridiculous must he appear who would attempt to disprove the fact of negative causation in moral science.

But how can we admit that there may be two co-existent causes in the same subject, one positive and the other negative? We are obliged to admit it from a due consideration of stubborn facts. For what fact can be more plain, than that from the same agent may, and actually do proceed, effects, virtue and vice, which are diametrically opposite to each other? And surely such effects must proceed from opposite causes. If therefore virtue proceeds from a positive

that the saints and angels in heaven never will sin; and does it therefore follow, that their liberty is destroyed, and that they

cause, as all must allow, vice must proceed from a negative causality. This evidence is demonstrative. Yet, the inquisitive may ask, is there any phenomenon in the nature of things analogous to this? Though an answer to this question is not necessary to the end of establishing the fact, it may serve, *ex abundanti*, for illustration. For this purpose, then, we may appeal to a mathematical *line*, which has positive length, with a *negation* of breadth: and without this negative causality no geometrical demonstration can be established. And the same may be said of a plane *superficies*, the boundaries of which are lines. Thus a negative causality enters into every geometrical demonstration, in conjunction with what is positive. But the reader should keep in mind that these instances are adduced for *illustration*, not professed *proofs* of the doctrine. The latter is founded on direct evidence from the very nature of God and that of a creature.

That a comparative defect is a *negative cause*, in the sense before explained, is evident, when we consider (as before intimated) that in no creature can it be found without a comparative good, conjoined with it; and that in free agents this good, which consists chiefly in the natural intellect and will, is capable of opposite directions, one conformable to rectitude and another opposed to it. Now, it is clearly impossible that these directions, one *for* the chief good, and the other *against* it, should proceed from the *same* cause, whether good or bad. The direction of the will *towards* rectitude cannot be caused by *defect*, any more than something positive can proceed from nihility. Nor can the directions of the will *against* rectitude be caused by *perfection* of any kind or degree. But intellect and will in all beings, whether original or derived, are perfections, and therefore cannot be the cause of a direction against perfection; for then there would be a cause repugnant to itself, which is impossible. The wrong choice, therefore, which is a wrong direction of the will, must proceed from a *negative* cause; for in causes there is no medium between positive and negative.

But though infinite perfection cannot be the cause of imperfection of any kind or degree, for reasons which have been already adduced, yet perfection affords *occasion*, an innocent occasion, for imperfection to show itself, by way of contrast. Thus, if absolute perfection were to produce no creature, no *occasion* would be afforded for comparative imperfection to show itself; and without the latter, moral evil would be impossible. The inference, therefore, is irrefragable, that moral evil originates from a *negative* causality, or that *defect* in the agent, which is the want of ulterior perfection. Yet here it may be proper to add, as of the utmost importance to be taken into the account, that though effects may proceed from negative causes, as well as from positive, and with *equal* certainty, yet there is this important difference; the former is only *hypothetical*, the latter *absolute*, originally considered. The first cause is positive existence independent of will, and unconditional, and every other positive cause must emanate from the first will; but a negative cause, consisting in defect, cannot possibly take place, with respect to causality, but on *condition*, viz. the condition of a created nature, and that of permission in the explained sense of the word. A positive cause may counteract the tendency of a negative one, but not *vice versa*.

Hence is derived the proper notion of *permitting* moral evil to take place; the negative cause is *not hindered* from taking effect, for reasons infinitely good and wise. But to represent this permission, or sufferance, as willing or decreeing the negative as well as the positive part of sin, is an infinite absurdity; for the sinfulness of an act being the direct opposite to infinite perfection, such representation makes infinite perfection to oppose itself. Thus all good, in every degree—every quantum of created nature, from the greatest to the least, together with all positive and active causality—are from God. "He is light," knowledge, and purity, "and with him there is no darkness at all," no ignorance, no want of holiness. And thus also all moral evil proceeds from the offender, who is the subject at once of a quantum of derived, and therefore li-

are not free, but forced in their actions? does it follow, that they are turned into blocks as the Arminians say the Calvinists'

mited perfection, and of comparative defect. And these two things (perfection and defect) enter into the very notion of a created nature.

Is it necessary to say any thing more in confirmation of the general theorem, that there is in the human mind a negative causality, from whence may flow a certainty of consequence? It may tend to the further satisfaction of the reader, if we advert to another argument founded on the nature of *free will.* The term "will" designates a power of the mind which is positive and active; but the term "free," connected with it, expresses a *negative* idea. For it expresses, when properly used, the *absence* of coercion and restraint, but in different respects. The complex idea of "free will" is resolved into this plain proposition, *the will is free;* that is, the will is *not constrained* in one respect, and is *not restrained* in another. It is neither decretively constrained to evil, nor decretively restrained from good. No other *freedom* can be predicated of the will as the cause of moral effects. And it is as much a relative nothing as a mathematical point. We may therefore safely affirm, that among the countless millions of moral effects, which take place, not only among men but also in the created universe of free agents, there is not one but what is beholden to a *negative causality* for its existence, in connexion with what is positive. For, if *freedom* be excluded, no act can have a *moral* quality.

To conclude this note, which has already exceeded the limits at first intended, we must observe once more, and it cannot be too strongly inculcated, that *there is no case or circumstance in which moral evil might not be prevented* by the supreme will, were it employed for that purpose. For as God is all sufficient, and as his control over his creatures, for their good, is absolute; his *power* to effect a prevention of moral evil is undoubted. Nor can there be any question that this power, in pursuance of divine decrees, does in fact, and in instances which to us are inconceivably numerous, counteract the tendencies of negative causes to prevent moral evil. But if it be required, *why* in *any instances* it is *permitted* to take place, when God might with infinite ease prevent it? It is sufficient here to say that God is infinitely *wise*, as well as powerful, and *equitable* as well as benevolent. But a further answer to this inquiry would lead us to consider the ultimate reasons of moral government, or why a moral system is at all established; and the question has been already discussed in the first volume of this work, to which the reader is referred.

COROLLARIES.

1. Negative causality, in connexion with what is positive, is an essential principle of moral science. If either be excluded, we can have no clear and adequate idea of any moral act, much less a demonstration of its cause.

2. These two principles relatively connected, furnish us with sufficient *data*, and the only sufficient ones, for a demonstrative solution of this problem, *What is the origin of moral evil?*

3. In these principles we have the means of demonstrating the origin of *all evil* whatever, as well as of all good.

4. We may further infer, that Mr. Locke was not mistaken, when he said, "I am bold to think, that *morality is capable of demonstration*, as well as mathematics." Essay B. III. chap. xi. § 16. And again, "The idea of a Supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves, as understanding, rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations—as might place *morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration:* wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences, as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one who will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one, as he does to the other of these sciences." B. IV. chap. iii. § 18. Once more, "This gave me the confidence

doctrines turn men? God decrees all the good that ever comes to pass; and then there certainly will come to pass no more good, than he has absolutely decreed to cause; and there certainly and infallibly will no more believe, no more be godly, no more be saved, than God has decreed that he will cause to believe, and cause to be godly, and will save. If God, from all eternity, knew that such and such things were future, then they were future; and consequently the proposition was from all eternity true, that such a thing, at such a time, would be. And it is as much impossible that a thing should be future, without some reason of its being future, as that it should actually be, without some reason why it is. It is as perfectly unreasonable to suppose, that this proposition should be true, *viz.* such a thing will be, or is to be, without a reason why it is true; as it is that this proposition should be true, such a thing actually is, or has been, without some reason why that is true, or why that thing exists. My meaning is, that it does not remain a question; but the matter is decided, whether the proposition shall be true or not.—The thing, in its own nature, is not necessary, but only possible; and therefore it is not of itself that it is future; it is not of itself in a state of futurition, if I may so speak,

to advance that conjecture, which I suggested, chap. 3. *viz.* That *morality is capable of demonstration*, as well as mathematics. And I doubt not but if a right method were taken a great part of morality might be made out with that clearness, that could leave to a considering man, no more reason to doubt, than he could have to doubt of the truth of propositions in mathematics which have been demonstrated to him." B. IV. chap. xii § 8.

5. As geometrical evidence proceeds upon the *supposition* of points, lines, angles, &c. and the province of the demonstration is to show the *consequence* resulting from the supposition; so, the above stated principles afford the means of demonstrating moral consequences, on the *supposition* of effects being *given* to show their necessary causes, or of causes being *given* to show their necessary effects. If the quantum of moral good, or of moral evil, in any given act, be *supposed*, the business of a demonstration is to show the relative proportion it bears to its appropriate cause or causes: Or, on the other hand, if the quantum of causal influence be *supposed*, to show as a demonstrative consequence, the nature and relative proportion of moral good or evil in the act. This is the true province of moral *science*, as contradistinguished from conjectural *observations* and a set of *rules*. These, in their proper place, have an important use for the purpose of moral conduct; but they can by no means furnish *data* for *scientific* knowledge.

6. There is one inference more that must not be omitted, *viz.* that the true principles and demonstrative consequences of moral science are incomparably more important in themselves, and ought to be more interesting to all mankind, than any others: because they lead us in a more direct manner than any others to the knowledge of God and ourselves. They point out to us at once the *sources* of good and evil, happiness and misery; they afford *motives* for devout affections of the noblest kind; and in proportion as they are properly applied, they stimulate to the practice of the sublimest virtues, and the most circumspect conduct. Without a divine revelation, indeed, it is highly probable, that the true principles and relations of moral science could never have been discovered by mankind; but that circumstance, while it has no tendency to depreciate the evidence, demands our gratitude to him who is the only source of "every good, and every perfect gift."—W.

but only in a state of possibility; and there must be some cause to bring it out of a state of mere possibility, into a state of futurition. It cannot be chance or mere accident: that is contrary to every rational supposition. For it is to be supposed, that there is some reason for it, and that something does decide it. If there be any thing that comes to pass by mere accident, that comes to pass of itself without any reason.

§ 13. The first objection of the Arminians is, that the divine decree infringes on the creature's liberty. In answer to this objection, we may observe some things to show what is the true notion of liberty, and the absurdity of their notion of liberty. Their notion is, that there is a sovereignty in the will, and that the will determines itself, so that its determination to choose or refuse this or that is primarily within itself; which description of liberty implies a self-contradiction. For it supposes the will, in its first act, choosing or refusing to be determined by itself; which implies that there is an antecedent act of the will to that first act, determining that act. —For, if the will determines its own first act, then there must be an act of the will before that first act, (for that determining is acting,) which is a contradiction. There can be no fallacy in this; for we know that if the will determines its own act, it does not determine it without acting. Therefore, here is this contradiction, *viz.* that there is an act of the will before the first act. There is an act of the will determining what it shall choose, before the first act of choice; which is as much as to say, that there is an act of volition before the first act of volition. For the will's determining what it will choose, is choosing, is willing. Therefore I inquire what determines that first act of the will, *viz.* its determination of its own act? It must be answered, according to their scheme, that it is the will by a foregoing act. Here, again, we have the same contradiction, *viz.* that the first act of the will is determined by an act that is before that first act. If the will determines itself, or determines its own choice, the meaning of it must be, if there be any meaning belonging to it, that the will determines how it will choose; and that it chooses according to that determination how to choose, or is directed in choosing by its own determination. But then I would inquire, whether that first determination, that directs the choice, be not itself an act or a volition; and if so, I would inquire what determines that act? Is it another determination still prior to that in the order of nature? then I would inquire, what determines the first act or determination of all? If the will, in its act of willing or choosing, determines or directs itself how to choose, then there is something done by the will prior to its act of choosing that is determined, *viz.* its determining or directing itself how to choose. This act determining or directing, must be something besides or distinct from the

choice determined or directed, and must be prior in order of nature to it. Here are two acts of the will, one the cause of the other, *viz.* the act of the will directing and determining, and the act or choice directed or determined. Now, I inquire, what determines that first act of the will determining or directing, to determine and direct as it does? If it be said, the will determines itself in that; then that supposes there is another act of the will prior to that, directing and determining that act, which is contrary to the supposition. And if it was not, still the question would recur, what determines that first determining act of the will?

§ 14. If the will determines itself, one of these three things, must be meant, *viz.* 1. That the very same act of the will determines itself. But this is as absurd as to say that something makes itself; and it supposes it to be done before it is. For the act of determining is as much prior to the thing determined, as the act making is before the thing made. Or, 2. The meaning must be, that the will determines its own act, by some other act that is prior to it in order of nature; which implies that the will acts before its first act. Or, 3. The meaning must be, that the faculty considered at the same time as perfectly without act, determines its own consequent act; which is to talk without a meaning and is a great absurdity. To suppose that the faculty remaining at the same time perfectly without act, can determine any thing, is a plain contradiction; for determining is acting. And besides, if the will does determine itself, that power of determining itself does not argue any freedom, unless it be by an act of the will, or unless that determination be itself an act of choice. For what freedom or liberty is there in the will's determining itself, without an act of choice in determining, whereby it may choose which way it will determine itself? So that those that suppose the will has a power of self-determination, must suppose that the very determination is an act of the will, or an act of choice, or else it does not at all help them out in what they would, *viz.* the liberty of the will. But if that very determination how to act, be itself an act of choice, then the question returns, what determines this act of choice?

§ 15. Also, the foreknowledge of God contradicts their notion of liberty. For if from all eternity God foreknew that such a thing would be, then the event was infallibly certain beforehand, and that proposition was true from all eternity, that such a thing would be; and therefore there was an indissoluble connexion beforehand between the subject and predicate of that proposition. If the proposition was true beforehand, the subject and predicate of it were connected beforehand. And therefore it follows from hence, that it is utterly impossible that it should not prove true, and that, for this reason, that it is utterly

impossible that a thing should be true, and not true, at the same time.

§ 16. The same kind of infallible certainty, that the thing will come to pass, or impossibility but that it should come to pass, that they object against, must necessarily be inferred another way, whether we hold the thing to be any way decreed or not. For it has been shown before, and I suppose none will deny, that God from all eternity decrees his own actions. Therefore he from all eternity decrees every punishment that he ever has inflicted, or will inflict. So that it is impossible, by their own reasoning, but that the punishment should come to pass. And if it be impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is equally impossible but that the sin should come to pass. For if it be possible that the sin should not come to pass, and yet impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is impossible but that God should punish that sin which may never be.

§ 17. For God certainly to know that a thing will be, that possibly may be, and possibly may not be, implies a contradiction. If possibly it may be otherwise, then how can God know certainly what it will be? If it possibly may be otherwise, then he knows it possibly may be otherwise; and that it is inconsistent with his certainly knowing that it will not be otherwise. If God certainly knows it will be, and yet it may possibly be otherwise, then it may possibly happen to be otherwise than God certainly knows it will be. If so, then it may possibly happen that God may be mistaken in his judgment, when he certainly knows: for it is supposed, that it is possible that it should be otherwise than he judges. For that it should be otherwise than he judges, and that he should be mistaken, are the same thing. How unfair therefore is it in those that hold the foreknowledge of God, to insist upon this objection from human liberty, against the decrees, when their scheme is attended with the same difficulty, exactly in the same manner!

§ 18. Their other objection is, that God's decree make God the author of sin. I answer, that there is no more necessity of supposing God the author of sin, on this scheme, than on the other. For if we suppose, according to my doctrine, that God has determined, from all eternity, the number and persons of those that shall perform the condition of the covenant of grace; in order to support this doctrine, there is no need of maintaining any more concerning God's decreeing sin, than this, *viz.* that God has decreed that he will *permit* all the sin that ever comes to pass, and that upon his permitting it, it will certainly come to pass. And they hold the same thing. For they hold, that God does determine beforehand to permit all the sin that does come to pass; and that he certainly knows, that if he does per-

mit it, it will come to pass. I say, they in their scheme allow both these; they allow that God does permit all the sin to come to pass, that ever does come to pass: and those that allow the foreknowledge of God, do also allow the other thing, *viz.* that he knows, concerning all the sin that ever does really come to pass, that it will come to pass upon his permitting it. So that if this be making God the author of sin, they make him so in the very same way that they charge us with doing it. They own that God does permit sin, and that he knows, with respect to all sin that ever is committed, that upon his permitting it, it will come to pass; and we hold no other. God's permission of sin they allow; and yet it would be a sin in men to permit sin. We ought not to permit, or suffer it, where we have opportunity to hinder it; and we cannot permit it, without making ourselves in some measure guilty. Yet they allow, that God permitting it does not make him guilty of it.

§ 19. They say that we ought to begin in religion, with the perfections of God, and make these a rule to interpret scripture. *Ans.* 1. If this be the best rule, I ask, why is it not as good a rule to argue from these perfections of God, his omniscience, infinite happiness, infinite wisdom and power, as his other attributes that they argue from? If it be not as good a rule to argue from these as those, it must be because they are not so certain; or because it is not so certain that he is possessed of these perfections. But this they will not maintain; for his moral perfections are proved no otherwise, than by arguing from his natural perfections; and therefore, the latter must be equally certain with the former. Again, *2dly*, they lay it down for a rule, to embrace no doctrine which they, by their own reason, cannot reconcile with the moral perfections of God. But I would show the unreasonableness of this rule. For, if this be a good rule, then it always was so. Let us then see what will follow. We shall then have reason to conclude every thing to be really inconsistent with God's moral perfections, that we cannot reconcile with his moral perfections; for if we have not reason to conclude that it is inconsistent, then we have no reason to conclude that it is not true. But if this be true, that we have reason to conclude every thing is consistent with God's moral perfections, which we cannot reconcile with those perfections, then David had reason to conclude, that some things that he saw take place, in fact, were inconsistent with God's moral perfections; for he could not reconcile them with those perfections, Psalm lxxiii. And Job had cause to come to the same conclusion concerning some events in his day. If it be a good rule, that we must conclude that to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, that we cannot reconcile with, or, which is the same thing, that we cannot see how it is inconsistent with those perfections, then it must be, because

we have reason to conclude that it cannot happen that our reason cannot see how it can be; and then it will follow, that we must reject the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, &c.

The scripture itself supposes, that there are some things in the scripture that men may not be able to reconcile with God's moral perfections. See Rom. ix. 19. "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" And the apostle does not answer the objection, by showing us how to reconcile it with the moral perfections of God, but by representing the arrogancy of quarrelling with revealed doctrines under such a pretence, and not considering the infinite distance between God and us. "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replies against God?" And God answered Job after the same manner. God rebuked him for darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and answered him only, by declaring and manifesting to him the infinite distance between God and him; so letting him know, that it became him humbly to submit to God, and acknowledge his justice, even in those things that were difficult to his reason; and that without solving his difficulties any other way, than by making him sensible of the weakness of his own understanding.

§ 20. If there be no election, then it is not God that makes men to differ, expressly contrary to scripture. Some of the ill consequences of the Arminian doctrine are, that it robs God of the greater part of the glory of his grace, and takes away a principal motive to love and praise him, and exalts man to God's room, and ascribes that glory to self, which belongs to God alone.

§ 21. That election is not from a foresight of works, as depending on the condition of man's will, is evident by 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Philip. ii. 13. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Rom. ix. 15, 16. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.—So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Men's labours and endeavours themselves are from God. 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

§ 22. They say, as God's power extends only to all things possible, so God's knowledge only extends to all things knowable. *Ans.* Things impossible, or contradictions, are not

things; but events that come to pass, are things. God's power does extend to all things, otherwise it would not be infinite. —So neither is the knowledge of God infinite, unless God knows all things. To suppose that God cannot do things impossible, does not suppose that God's power can be increased. But to suppose that God does not know men's free actions, does suppose that God's knowledge may be increased.

§ 23. If God absolutely determined that Christ's death should have success in gathering a church to him, it will follow, that there was a number absolutely elected, or that God had determined some should surely be saved. If God determined that some should surely be saved, that implies that he had determined that some should perform the conditions of salvation, and be saved; or, which is the same thing, that he would cause that they should be surely saved. But this cannot be, without fixing on the persons beforehand. For the cause is before the effect. There is no such thing as God's resolving absolutely beforehand that he would save some, and yet not determining who they should be, before they were actually saved: or that there should be in a number the requisites of salvation, and yet not determine who, till they actually have the requisites of salvation. But God had absolutely determined that some should be saved, yea a great number after Christ's death; and had determined it beforehand. Because he had absolutely promised it; Isa. xlix. 6. and liii. 10. See in Psalm lxxii. and other places in the Psalms, and Tit. ii 14. God having absolutely purposed this before Christ's death, must either have then determined the persons, or resolved that he would hereafter determine the persons: at least, if he saw there was need of it, and saw that they did not come in of themselves. But this latter supposition, if we allow it, overthrows the Arminian scheme. It shows, that such a predetermination, or absolute election, is not inconsistent with God's perfections, or the nature of the gospel constitution, or God's government of the world, and his promise of reward to the believing and obedient, and the design of gospel offers and commands, as the Arminians suppose. If God has absolutely determined to save some certain persons, then, doubtless, he has in like manner determined concerning all that are to be saved. God's promising supposes not only that the thing is future, but that God will do it. If it be left to chance, or man's contingent will, and the event happen right, God is never the truer. He performs not his promise; he takes no effectual care about it; it is not he who promised, that performs. That thing, or rather *no*-thing, called fortune, orders all.—Concerning the absurdity of supposing that it was not absolutely determined beforehand, what success there should be of Christ's death; see *Polhill's Spec. Thelog. in Christo*, p. 165—171.

§ 24. It is pretended, that the antecedent certainty of any sin being committed, seeing that it is attended with necessity, takes away all liberty, and makes warnings and exhortations to avoid sin, a mere illusion. To this I would bring the instance of Peter. Christ told him, that he should surely deny him thrice that night before the cock should crow twice. And yet, after that, Christ exhorted all his disciples to watch and pray, that they might not fall into temptation.—"God's decree does not at all take off the use of our endeavours. For in the use of means, the very decree itself is to receive its accomplishment. Let me refer you to a scripture story for the illustration and proof of this. When the apostle Paul was in imminent danger of shipwreck, in his voyage to Rome, he encouraged the company, by assuring them, there should not be the loss of any man's life, but only of the vessel. For, says he, 'there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.' Acts xxvii. 23, 24. Yet when the shipmen were by and by going to flee out of the ship, to save themselves by the boat, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved: which did not at all weaken the assurance he had just before given them from God, that they should all be saved; for God, who had appointed the end, that they should be saved; had also appointed the means, that they should be saved by the help of these shipmen. So, though God has ordained the salvation of those that shall be saved, he has ordained it in the way of faith and holiness, and a working out their own salvation with fear and trembling." Cooper *on Predestination unto Life*, p. 58, 59.

§ 25. It follows from the infinite perfection of God, that he equally determines within himself all his own works at once. God cannot but be capable of this by his knowledge of all possibilities, and wisdom to judge, at one view, which of them were fittest to be carried into existence through boundless ages. And is it not the wisdom of every agent, before he sets about a work of any compass, to fix in his design, as far as he can, all things that any way relate to it? Now, all God's works, from the beginning of the creation to the consummation of all things, are one whole and entire grand scheme, whose ultimate end lies at a vast distance from the beginning, and all the intermediate operations, as so many parts, conspire to it in a regular connexion. How, then, can it be consistent with his most perfect wisdom, to leave any of them to an after-thought, when he had forethought sufficient to provide for all alike? And, since he would not knowingly suffer any thing utterly incon-

sistent with his own glory, as he had power to hinder it, he has, no doubt, fixed such bounds and limitations to all his creatures, that nothing shall be produced by any of them, which may not have a proper place and use in the sum of events. He has settled, also, particular subordinate ends to individual events, and a general good end on the whole, which they shall altogether subserve. 'Of him,' we are told, 'and through him, and to him, are all things.' Rom. xi. 36. 'The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.' Psalm xxxiii. 11. Nothing can ever arise to surprise him, or cast any difficulty or perplexity in his way, he having already, from eternity, settled the proper measures of conduct in every case that shall emerge. How incomprehensible and wonderful in counsel, as well as excellent in working, is God! and what reason have we to cry out, 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom. xi. 33." HUBBARD. *Faith and Pract.* Sermon 6.

§ 26. As to the decrees of election, see Psalm lxv. 4. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Isaiah xli. 9. "Thou, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." Matth. xx. 16. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Chap. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen." Chap. xxiv. 24. "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very *elect.*" John vi. 37—46. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," &c. Chap. x. 3, 4, and verse 11, and 14—17, 26—30. "To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. I am the good Shepherd; and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Therefore doth my Father love me; because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. But ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you," &c. Chap. xvii. 6—20. "I have manifested thy name unto the men thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word, &c. Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Acts xviii. 10. "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much

people in this city."—"All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." John vi. 44—46. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day," &c. Chap. xvii. 9—13. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine," &c. 1 Thess. v. 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."—"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, &c. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour? &c. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews, only, but also of the Gentiles. Esaias, also, crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: And, as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." Rom. ix.—"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I, also, am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, &c. Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise, work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi.

§ 27. Concerning the Arminian notion, that when the apostles speak of election, they only mean that by which the professing Christians in those days were distinguished from others, as the nation of Israel of old was; this is unreasonable, according to their own principles. For if they were elected, and that was the reason why they so far embraced the gospel, as to become Christians rather than others, then, on Arminian principles, no thanks were due to them for embracing the gospel. Besides, their principles render vain all endeavours to spread the gospel. For the gospel will certainly be spread to all nations that are elected; and all such shall have the offers of the gospel, whether they take any care of the matter or no. Dr. Whitby, to make out his scheme, makes the word election signify two

entirely different things; one, election to a common faith of Christianity; another, a conditional election to salvation. But every one must be sensible of the unreasonableness of such shifting and varying, and turning into all shapes, to evade the force of scripture. It is evident the apostle in Rom. ix. has not only respect to God's sovereignty in the election and preterition of nations; because he illustrates his meaning by the instance of a particular person, *viz.* Pharaoh. The exercise of the sovereignty that he speaks of, appears by the express words of the apostle about vessels of mercy, and vessels of wrath: vessels of honour, and vessels of dishonour. But the vessels of mercy, he speaks of as prepared to glory. They, it is plain, are those that shall be saved; and the vessels of wrath are those that perish. He speaks of those that shall be saved, ver. 27. "A remnant shall be saved." What is there that God doth decree, according to the scheme of the Arminians, so as to make it in any measure consistent with itself? He does not decree any of the great events of the world of mankind, (which are the principal events, and those to which all others are subordinated,) because these depend on men's free will. And if God does not decree and order those events beforehand, then what becomes of the providence of God? and what room is there for prayer, if there be no providence? Prayer is shut out this way also. According to them, we cannot reasonably pray for the accomplishment of things that are already fixed, before our prayers: for then our prayers alter nothing, and what, say they, signifies it for us to pray?

§ 28. To Dr. Whitby's observation, that the apostle speaks of churches, as though they were all elect; I answer, He speaks from a judgment of charity, as Dr. Whitby himself observes, p. 460. God foreknows the elect, as God is said to know those that are his own sheep from strangers; as Christ is said not to know the workers of iniquity, that is, he owns them not. In the same sense, God is said to know the elect from all eternity; that is, he knew them as a man knows his own things. He acknowledged them from eternity. He owns them as his children. If God ever determined, in the general, that some of mankind should certainly be saved, and did not leave it altogether undetermined whether ever so much as one soul of all mankind should believe in Christ; it must be, that he determined that some particular persons should certainly believe in him. For it is certain, that if he has left undetermined concerning this and that, and the other person, whether ever he should believe or not, and so of every particular person in the world; then there is no necessity at all, that this or that, or any particular person in the world, should ever be saved by Christ, for matter of any determination of God's. So that, though God sent his Son into the world, yet the matter was left altogether

undetermined by God, whether ever any person should be saved by him ; and there was all this ado about Christ's birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at God's right hand, when it was not as yet determined whether he should ever save one soul, or have any mediatorial kingdom at all.

§ 29. It is most absurd, to call such a conditional election as they talk of, by the name of election, seeing there is a necessary connexion between faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life. Those that believe in Christ must be saved, according to God's inviolable constitution of things. What nonsense is it, therefore, to talk of choosing such to life from all eternity out of the rest of mankind ? A predestination of such to life, is altogether useless and needless. By faith in one that has satisfied for sin, the soul necessarily becomes free from sin. By faith in one that has bought eternal life for them, they have, of unavoidable consequence, a right to eternal life. Now, what sense is it to say, that God from all eternity, of his free grace, chose out those that he foresaw would have no guilt of sin, that they should not be punished for their guilt, as others were, when it is a contradiction to suppose that they can be punished for their guilt, when they have none ? for who can lay any thing to their charge, when it is Christ that has died ? And what do they mean by an election of men to that which is, in its own nature, impossible that it should not be, whether they are elected to it or no : or by God's choosing them that had a right to eternal life, that they should possess it ? What sense is it to say, that a creditor chooses out those among his debtors to be free from debt, that owe him nothing ? But if they say, that election is only God's determination, in the general, that all that believe shall be saved ; in what sense can this be called election ? They are not *persons* that are here chosen, but mankind is divided into two sorts, the one believing, and the other unbelieving ; and God chooses the believing sort ; it is not election of persons, butof qualifications. God (say they) does from all eternity, choose to bestow eternal life upon those that have a right to it, rather than upon those who have a right to damnation. Is this all the election we have an account of in God's word ?—Such a thing as election may well be allowed ; for that there is such a thing as sovereign love, is certain ; that is, love, not for any excellency, but merely God's good pleasure. For whether it is proper to say, that God from all eternity loved the elect or no, it is proper to say, that God loved men after the fall, while sinners and enemies ; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die. This was not for any goodness or excellency, but merely God's good pleasure. For he would not love the fallen angels.

§ 30. Christ is often spoken of in scripture as being, by way of eminency, the Elect, or chosen of God. Isa. xlii. 1. " Be-

hold my servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth." Luke xxiii. 35. "If he be the Christ, the chosen of God." 1 Pet. ii. 4. "A living stone, chosen of God, and precious." Psalm lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my Chosen:" ver. 19. "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." Hence those persons in the Old Testament, that were the most remarkable types of Christ, were the subjects of a very remarkable election of God, by which they were designed to some peculiar honour of the prophetical, priestly, or kingly office. So Moses was called God's chosen in that wherein he was eminently a type of Christ, *viz.* as a prophet and ruler, and mediator for his people; Psalm cvi. 23. "Had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach." So Aaron was constituted high priest by a remarkable election of God, as in Numb. xvi. 5. and xvii. 5. Deut. xxi. 5. And David the king was the subject of a remarkable election; Psalm lxxvii. 67—72. "Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Sion, which he loved, &c. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young; he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." 1 Sam. xvi. 7—10. "The Lord hath not chosen this, neither hath the Lord chosen this: the Lord hath not chosen these." Christ is the chosen of God, both as to his divine and human nature. As to his divine nature, he was chosen of God, though not to any addition to his essential glory or real happiness, which is infinite; yet to great declarative glory. As he is man, he is chosen of God to the highest degree of real glory and happiness of all creatures. As to both, he is chosen of God to the office and glory of the mediator between God and men, and the head of all the elect creation. His election, as it respects his divine nature, was for his worthiness and excellency and infinite amiableness in the sight of God, and perfect fitness for that which God chose him to; and his worthiness was the ground of his election. But his election, as it respects his human nature, was free and sovereign, not being for any worthiness; but his election was the foundation of his worthiness. God had determined to exalt one of the creatures so high, that he should be one person with God, and should have communion with God, and should have glory in all respects answerable; and so should be the head of all other elect creatures, that they might be united to God, and glorified in him. And his sovereignty appears in the election of the man Jesus, various ways. It appears in choosing the species of creatures of which he should be, *viz.* the race of mankind, and not the angels, the superior species. God's sovereignty also appears in choosing this creature of the seed of fallen creatures, that were become enemies and rebels,

abominable, miserable creatures. It appears, in choosing that he should be of such a branch of mankind, in selecting the posterity of David, a mean person originally, and the youngest of the family. And as he was the seed of the woman, so his sovereignty appears in his being the seed of such particular woman; as of Leah, the uncomely wife of Jacob, whom her husband had not chosen, &c. And his sovereignty appears in the choice of that individual female of whom Christ was born.

§ 31. It was owing to this election of God, that the man Jesus was not one of the corrupt race of mankind; so that his freedom from sin is owing to the free, sovereign, electing love of God in him, as well as in the rest of elect men. All holiness, all obedience and good works, and perseverance in him, was owing to the electing love of God, as well as in his elect members. For if he had failed; if his courage, resolution, and love, had been conquered by his sufferings, he never could have been delivered from them; for then he would have failed in his obedience to God; and his love to God failing, and being overcome by sufferings, these sufferings would have failed of the nature of an acceptable sacrifice to God; and the infinite value of his sufferings would have failed, and so must be made up in infinite duration, to atone for his own deficiency. But God having chosen Christ, he could not fail in this work, and so was delivered from his sufferings, from the eternity of them, by the electing love of God. Justification and glorification were fruits of God's foreknowledge and predestination in him, as well as in his elect members. So Christ's election is the foundation of ours, as much as his justification and glorification are the foundation of ours.

§ 32. 2 Thess. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Concerning this scripture I observe the following things:—1. The word translated *chosen*, is a word that signifies to choose or pick out from many others. 2. That this choosing is given as a reason, why those differ from others, that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, as an instance of the distinguishing grace of God; and therefore the apostle mentions their being chosen, their election, as the ground of their sanctifications by the Spirit and belief of the truth. 3. The apostle speaks of their being chosen to salvation, as a ground of their perseverance, or the reason why they never shall fall away, as others spoken of before, whereby they failed of salvation. See the preceding verses. Compare Heb. vi. 9—14. They are spoken of as thus chosen from the beginning.—And that place, Matt. xx. 21, 22, 23. "Grant that these my two sons may sit

one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom ;—it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father ;" affords an invincible argument for particular personal predestination.

§ 33. There were many absolute promises of old, that salvation should actually be accomplished, and that it should be of great extent, or extended to great multitudes of mankind ; as, that " the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." " In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Psalm cx. " Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power :" and innumerable others. And if there were absolute promises of this, then there were absolute purposes of it ; for that which is sincerely absolutely promised, is with an absolute purpose of fulfilling the promise. But how can it be devised, that there should be an absolute, determinate, infallible, unchangeable purpose, that Christ should actually save vast multitudes of mankind ; and yet it be not absolutely purposed that he should save any one single person, but that, with regard to every individual soul, this was left to be determined by man's contingent will, which might determine for salvation, or against it, there being nothing to render it impossible, concerning any one, that his will would not finally determine against it ? Observe, these prophecies are not merely predictions, but are of the nature of promises, and are often so called :—" which he hath promised by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," &c. God takes care to fulfil his own promises ; but, according to this scheme, it is not God that fulfils these promises ; but men, left to themselves, to their contingent wills, fulfil them. Man's will, which God does not determine, determines itself in exclusion of God.

§ 34. Concerning that grand objection, that this doctrine supposes partiality in God, and is very dishonourable to him, being quite contrary to God's extensive and universal benevolence to his creatures : it may be shown, that the Arminian notions and principles, in this matter, lead directly to Deism ; and that, on these principles, it is utterly impossible to answer Tindal's objections against revealed religion, especially in his 14th chapter. Besides, unjustifiable partiality is not imputable to a sovereign distribution of his favours, though ever so unequally, unless it be done unwisely, and so as to infringe the common good. God has regard to conditions in his decrees, as he has regard to a wise order and connexion of things. Such is his wisdom in his decrees and all his acts and operations, that, if it were not for wise connexion that is regarded, many things would not be decreed. One part of the wise system of events would not have been decreed, unless the other parts had been decreed also.

§ 35. God, in the decree of election, is justly to be considered as decreeing the creature's eternal happiness, antecedently to any foresight of good works, in a sense wherein he does not in reprobation decree the creature's eternal misery, antecedently to any foresight of sin; because the being of sin is supposed, in the first place, in order in the decree of reprobation, which is, that God will glorify his vindictive justice; and the very notion of revenging justice, simply considered, supposes a fault to be revenged. But faith and good works are not supposed in the first place in order to the decree of election. The first things in order in this decree are, that God will communicate his happiness, and glorify his grace; (for these two seem to be co-ordinate.) But in neither of these are faith and good works supposed. For, when God decrees, and seeks to communicate his own happiness in the creature's happiness, the notion of this, simply considered, supposes or implies nothing of faith or good works; nor does the notion of grace, in itself, suppose any such thing. It does not necessarily follow, from the very nature of grace, or God's communicativeness of his own happiness, that there must be faith and good works.

§ 36. What divines intend by *prior* and *posterior*, in the affair of God's decrees, is, not that one is before another in the order of time; for all are from eternity; but that we must conceive the view or consideration of one decree to be before another, inasmuch as God decrees one thing out of respect to another decree, so that one decree must be conceived of as in some sort to be the ground of another; or that God decrees one because of another; or that he would not have decreed one, had he not decreed that other. Now, there are two ways in which divine decrees may be said to be, in this sense, prior one to another. 1. When one thing decreed, is the end of another, this must, in some respect, be conceived of as prior to that other. The good to be obtained, is, in some respect, prior in the consideration of him who decrees and disposes, to the means of obtaining it. 2. When one thing decreed is the ground on which the disposer goes, in seeking such an end by another thing decreed, as being the foundation of the capableness or fitness that there is in that other thing decreed, to obtain such an end. Thus, the sinfulness of the reprobate is the ground on which God goes in determining to glorify his justice in the punishment of his sinfulness; because his sinfulness is the foundation of the possibility of obtaining that end by such means. His having sin, is the foundation of both the fitness and possibility of justice being glorified in the punishment of his sin; and, therefore, the consideration of the being of sin in the subject, must, in some respect, be prior in the mind of the disposer, to the determination to glorify his justice in the punishment of sin. For the disposer must first

consider the capableness and aptness of such means for such an end, before he determines them to such an end. Thus God must be conceived of, as first considering Adonibezek's cruelty in cutting off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, as that which was to be, before he decreed to glorify his justice in punishing that cruelty, by the cutting off his thumbs and great toes. But this aptness depends on the nature of that sin that was punished. Therefore the disposer, in fixing on those means for this end, must be conceived of as having that sin in view. Because sinfulness is necessarily supposed as already existing in the decree of punishing sinfulness. That which stands in the place of the ultimate end, in a decree, *i. e.* that which is a mere end, and not a means to any thing further or higher, *viz.* the shining forth of God's glory, and the communication of his goodness, must, indeed, be considered as prior, in the consideration of the Supreme Disposer, to every thing, excepting the mere possibility of it. But this must, in some respects, be conceived of as prior to that, because possibility is necessarily supposed in his decree. But, if we descend lower than the highest end; if we come down to other events decreed, that be not mere ends, but means to obtain that end; then we must necessarily bring in more things, as in some respect prior, in the same manner as mere possibility is in this highest decree. The vindictive justice of God is not to be considered as a mere or ultimate end, but as a means to an end. Indeed, God's glorifying his justice, or rather his glorifying his holiness and greatness, has the place of a mere and ultimate end. But his glorifying his justice in punishing sin, (or in exercising vindictive justice, which is the same,) is not to be considered as a mere end, but a certain way or means of obtaining an end. Vindictive justice is not to be considered as a certain distinct attribute to be glorified, but as a certain way and means for the glorifying an attribute. Every distinct way of God's glorifying or exercising an attribute, might as well be called a distinct attribute as this. It is but giving a distinct name to it, and so we might multiply attributes without end. The considering of the glorifying of vindictive justice as a mere end, has led to great misrepresentations, and undue and unhappy expressions, about the decree of reprobation. Hence the glorifying of God's vindictive justice on such particular persons has been considered as altogether prior in the decree to their sinfulness, yea to their very beings. Whereas it being only a means to an end, those things that are necessarily presupposed, in order to the fitness and possibility of this means of obtaining the end, must be conceived of as prior to it.

§ 37. Hence God's decree of the eternal damnation of the reprobate, is not to be conceived of as prior to the fall, yea,

and to the very being of the persons, as the decree of the eternal glory of the elect is. For God's glorifying his love, and communicating his goodness, stands in the place of a mere or ultimate end; and therefore is prior in the mind of the eternal disposer to the very being of the subject, and to every thing but mere possibility. The goodness of God gives the being, as well as the happiness of the creature, and does not presuppose it. Indeed, the glorifying of God's mercy, as it presupposes the subject to be miserable, and the glorifying his grace, as it presupposes the subject to be sinful, unworthy and ill-deserving, are not to be conceived of as ultimate ends, but only as certain ways and means for the glorifying the exceeding abundance and overflowing fulness of God's goodness and love; therefore these decrees are not to be considered as prior to the decree of the being of the subject. And the decree of election, as it implies a decree of glorifying God's mercy and grace, considers men as being cursed and fallen; because the very notion of such a decree supposes sin and misery. Hence we may learn, how much in the decree of predestination is to be considered as prior to the creation and fall of man, and how much as posterior *viz.* that God's decree to glorify his love and communicate his goodness, and to glorify his greatness and holiness, is to be considered as prior to creation and the fall of man. And because the glory of God's love, and the communication of his goodness, necessarily imply the happiness of the creature, and give both their being and happiness; hence the design to communicate and glorify his goodness and love externally to a certain number, is to be considered as prior, in both those mentioned respects, to their being and fall. For such a design, in the notion of it, presupposes neither. But nothing in the decree of reprobation is to be looked upon as antecedent to man's being and fall.

§ 38. The decrees of God must be conceived of in the same order, and as antecedent to, and consequent on one another, in the same manner as God's act in the execution of those decrees. They depend on one another, and are grounded on one another, in the same manner as the decrees that these are the execution of, and in no other. For, the decrees of God are no other than his eternal doing what is done, acted, or executed by him in time. God's acts themselves, in executing, can be conceived of no otherwise, than as decrees for a present effect. They are acts of God's will. God brings things to pass only by acts of his will. He speaks, and it is done. His will says, let it be, and it is. And this act of his will that now is, cannot be looked upon as really different from that act of will that was in him before, and from eternity, in decreeing that this thing should be at this time. It differs only relatively. Here is no new act of the will in God, but only the same acts

of will, which before, because the time was not come, respected future time; and so were called decrees. But now the time being come, they respect present time, and so are not called by us decrees, but acts executing decrees. Yet they are evidently the same acts in God. Therefore those acts, in executing, must certainly be conceived of the same order, and with the same dependence, as the decrees themselves. It may be in some measure illustrated by this:—The decree of God, or the will of God decreeing events, may be represented as a straight line of infinite length, that runs through all past eternity and terminates in the event. The last point in the line, is the act of God's will in bringing the event to pass, and does not at all differ from all the other points throughout the infinite length of the line, in any other respect but this, that this last point is next to the event. This line may be represented as in motion, but yet always kept parallel to itself. The higher end of the line, by its motion, describes events in the order in which they come to pass; or at least represents God's acts in bringing the events to pass, in their order and mutual dependence and consequence. By the motion of all the other points of the line, before the event or end of the line, in the whole infinite length of it, are represented the decrees in their order; which, because the line in all its motions is kept parallel to itself, is exactly the same with the order of the motions of the last point. For the motion of every point of the whole line, is, in all respects, just like the motion of that last point wherein the line terminates in the event; and the different parts of the motion of every point, are in every respect precisely in the same order. And the maxim, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, does not in the least concern this matter. For, by last in execution, is meant only last in order of time, without any respect to the priority or posteriority that we are speaking of; and it does not at all hinder, but that in God's acts, in executing his decrees, one act is the ground or reason of another act, in the same manner precisely as the decree that related to it was the ground or reason of the other decree. The absolute independence of God, no more argues against some of God's decrees being grounded on decrees of some other things that should first come to pass, than it does against some of God's acts in time, being grounded on some other antecedent acts of his. It is just the same with God's acts in executing, as has been said already of his decreeing. In one respect, the end that is afterward to be accomplished, is the ground of God's acting; in another respect, something that is already accomplished, is the ground of his acting, as it is the ground of the fitness or capableness of the act to obtain the end. There is nothing but the ultimate end of all things, *viz.* God's glory, and the communi-

cation of his goodness, that is prior to all first acts in creating the world, in one respect, and mere possibility in another. But, with respect to after acts, other ends are prior in one respect, and other preceding acts are prior in another, just as I have shown it to be with respect to God's decrees.

§ 39. Now, this being established, it may help more clearly to illustrate, and fully to evidence, what we have insisted on concerning the order of the decrees, and that God's decrees of some things that are accomplished first in order of time, are also prior in the order, so as to be the proper ground and reason of other decrees. For, let us see how it is in God's acts in executing his decrees. Will any deny that God's act in rewarding righteousness, is grounded on a foregoing act of his in giving righteousness? and that he rewards righteousness in such a person, because he hath given righteousness to such a person; and that because this latter act necessarily supposes the former act foregoing? So, in like manner, God's decree, in determining to reward righteousness, is grounded on an antecedent decree to give righteousness; because the former decree necessarily supposes the latter decree, and implies it in the very notion of it. So, who will deny, but that God's act in punishing sin, is grounded on God's permitting sin, or suffering it to be, because the former necessarily supposes the latter, and therefore that the actual permission of sin is prior, in the order of nature, to the punishment of it?

§ 40. It may be objected to this, that if so, the decree of bestowing salvation on an elect soul, is founded on the decree of bestowing faith on him; for God actually bestows salvation in some respect, because he has bestowed faith; and this would be to make the decree of election succedaneous to the decree of giving faith. To this I answer, that both God's act, and also his decree of bestowing salvation on such a fallen creature, is in some respects, grounded on God's act and decree of giving faith, but in nowise as the decree or act of eternal punishing is grounded on sin, because punishment necessarily presupposes sin; so that it could not be without it. But the decreeing and giving the happiness of the elect, is not so founded on faith. The case is very different. Indeed, the salvation of an elect soul is, in this respect, grounded on the decree of giving faith, as God's decree of bestowing happiness on the elect is in this particular way. But the decree of bestowing happiness in general, which we conceive of as antecedent to this act, presupposes no such thing; nor does just so much without any more in execution presuppose faith, or indeed the righteousness of Christ, or any act or suffering of a mediator, or even the fall of man. And the decree of God's communicating his goodness to such a subject, does not so much as

presuppose the being of the subject; because it gives being. But there is no decree of evil to such a subject, which can be convinced of as antecedent to a decree of punishment.

§ 41. The objection to the divine decrees will be, that according to this doctrine, God may do evil, that good may come of it. *Ans.* I do not argue, that God may commit evil, that good may come of it; but that he may permit that it may come to pass, that good may come of it. It is in itself absolutely evil, for any being to commit evil, that good may come of it; and the only reason why it would not be lawful for a creature to *permit* evil to come to pass, and that it would not be wise, or good and virtuous in him so to do, is, that he has not perfect wisdom and sufficiency, so as to render it fit that such an affair should be trusted with him. In so doing, he goes beyond his line; he goes out of his providence; he meddles with things too high for him. It is every one's duty to do things fit for him in his sphere, and commensurate to his power. God never intrusted this providence in the hands of creatures of finite understandings; nor is it proper that he should.

If a prince were of perfect and all-comprehensive wisdom and foresight, and he should see that an act of treason would be for the great advancement of the welfare of his kingdom, it might be wise and virtuous in him to permit that such act of treason should come to pass; yea, it would be foolish and wrong if he did not. It would be prudent and wise in him *not to restrain* the traitor, but to let him alone to go on in the way he chose. And yet he might hate the treason at the same time, and he might properly, also, give forth laws at the same time, forbidding it upon pain of death, and might hold these laws in force against this traitor.

§ 42. The Arminians themselves allow, that God permits sin; and that if he permits it, it will come to pass. But it is demonstrably true, that if God sees that good will come of it, and more good than otherwise, so that when the whole series of events is viewed by God, and all things are balanced—the sum of good with the evil being more than without it, all being subtracted that need be subtracted, and added that is to be added—the sum total of good is greater than the sum in any other case, then it will follow, that God, if he be a wise and holy being, must permit it.—For if this sum total be really the best, how can it be otherwise than that it should be chosen by an infinitely wise and good being whose holiness and goodness consists in always choosing what is best? Which does it argue most, wisdom or folly, a good disposition or an evil one, when two things are set before a being, the one better and the other worse, to choose the worse, and refuse the better?

§ 43. To conclude this discourse: I wish the reader to consider the unreasonableness of rejecting plain revelations, be-

cause they are puzzling to our reason. So that though the doctrine of the decrees be mysterious, and attended with difficulties, yet the opposite doctrine is in itself more mysterious, and attended with greater difficulties, and with contradictions to reason more evident, to one who thoroughly considers things; so that, even if the scripture had made no revelation of it, we should have had reason to believe it. But since the scripture is so abundant in declaring it, the unreasonableness of rejecting it appears the more glaring.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING EFFICACIOUS GRACE.

§ 1. It is manifest that the scripture supposes, that if ever men are turned from sin, God must undertake it, and he must be the doer of it; that it is his doing that must determine the matter; that all that others can do, will avail nothing, without his agency. This is manifest by such texts as these, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh," &c. Lam. v. 21. "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." Psalm lxxx. 3. "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." The same in verse 7 and 19: Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved; for Thou art my praise."

§ 2. According to Dr. Whitby's notion of the assistance of the Spirit, the Spirit of God does nothing in the hearts or minds of men beyond the power of the devil; nothing but what the devil can do: and nothing showing any greater power in any respect than the devil shows and exercises in his temptations. For he supposes, that all that the Spirit of God does, is to bring moral motives and inducements to mind, and set them before the understanding, &c. It is possible that God may infuse grace, in some instances, into the minds of such persons as are striving to obtain it in the other way, though they may not observe it, and may not know that it is not obtained by gradual acquisition. But if a man has indeed sought it only in that way, and with as much dependence on himself, and with as much neglect of God, in his endeavours and prayers as such a doctrine naturally leads to, it is not very likely that he should

obtain saving grace by the efficacious mighty power of God. It is most likely that God should bestow this gift, in a way of earnest attention to divine truth, and the use of the means of grace, with reflection on one's own sinfulness, and in a way of being more and more convinced of sinfulness and total corruption, and need of the divine power to restore the heart, to infuse goodness, and of becoming more and more sensible of one's own impotence, and inability to obtain goodness by his own strength. And if a man has obtained no other virtue, than what seems to have been wholly in that gradual and insensible way that might be expected from use and custom, in the exercise of his own strength, he has reason to think, however bright his attainments may seem to be, that he has no saving virtue.—Great part of the gospel is denied by those who deny pure efficacious grace. They deny that wherein actual salvation and the application of redemption mainly consists; and how unlikely are such to be successful in their endeavours after actual salvation.

§ 3. Concerning the supposition advanced by Bishop Butler, and by Turnbull in his *Christian Philosophy*, that all that God does, even miracles themselves, are wrought according to general laws, such as are called the laws of nature, though unknown to us; and the supposition of Turnbull, that all may be done by angels acting by general laws; I observe, this seems to be unreasonable. If angels effect these works, acting only by general laws, then they must do them without any immediate, special interposition at all, even without the smallest intimation of the divine mind, what to do, or upon what occasion God would have any thing to be done. And what will this doctrine bring inspiration to, which is one kind of miracle? According to this, all significations of the divine mind, even to the prophets and apostles, must be according to general laws, without any special interposition at all of the divine agency.

§ 4. Acts xii. 23. God was so angry with Herod for not giving him the glory of his eloquence, that the angel of the Lord smote him immediately, and he died a miserable death; he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But if it be very sinful for man to take to himself the glory of such a qualification as eloquence, how much more a man's taking to himself the glory of divine grace, God's own image, and that which is infinitely God's most excellent, precious and glorious gift, and man's highest honour, excellency and happiness, whereby he is partaker of the divine nature, and becomes a godlike creature? If God was so jealous for the glory of so small a gift, how much more for so high an endowment, this being that alone, of all other things, by which man becomes like God? If not giving God the glory of that which is least honourable, provokes God's jealousy; much more must not giving God the glory of

that which is infinitely the most honourable? It is allowed, the apostle insists upon it, that the primitive Christians should be sensible that the glory of their gifts belonged to God, and that they made not themselves to differ. But how small a matter is this, if they make themselves to differ in that, which the apostle says is so much more excellent than all gifts? How much more careful has God shown himself, that men should not be more proud of their virtue, than of any other gift? see Deut. ix. 4. Luke xviii. 9. and innumerable other places. And the apostle plainly teaches us to ascribe to God the glory, not only of our redemption, but of our wisdom, righteousness and sanctification; 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. Again, the apostle plainly directs, that all that glory in their virtue, should glory in the Lord, 2 Cor. x. 17. It is glorying in virtue and virtuous deeds he is there speaking of; and it is plain, that the apostle uses the expression of glorying in the Lord, in such a sense, as to imply ascribing the glory of our virtue to God. The doctrine of men's being the determining causes of their own virtue, teaches them not to do so much as even the proud Pharisee did, who thanked God for making him to differ from other men in virtue, Luke xvii. See Gen. xli. 15, 16; Job xi. 12; Dan. ii. 25.

§ 5. The Arminian doctrine, and the doctrine of our new philosophers, concerning the habits of virtue being only by custom, discipline, and gradual culture, joined with the other doctrine, that the obtaining of these habits in those that have time for it is in every man's power, according to their doctrine of the freedom of will, tends exceedingly to cherish presumption in sinners, while in health and vigour, and tends to their utter despair, in sensible approaches of death by sickness or old age.

§ 6. The questions relating to efficacious grace, controverted between us and the Arminians, are two: 1. Whether the grace of God, in giving us saving virtue, be determining and decisive. 2. Whether saving virtue be decisively given by a supernatural and sovereign operation of the spirit of God: or, whether it be only by such a divine influence or assistance, as is imparted in the course of common providence, either according to established laws of nature, or established laws of God's universal providence towards mankind: *i. e.* either, 1. Assistance which is given in all natural actions, wherein men do merely exercise and improve the principles and laws of nature, and come to such attainments as are connected with such exercises by the mere laws of nature. For there is an assistance in all such natural actions; because it is by a divine influence that the laws of nature are upheld; and a constant concurrence of divine power is necessary in order to our living, moving, or having a being. This we may call a natural assistance. Or,

2. That assistance which, though it be something besides the upholding of the laws of nature, (which take place in all affairs of life,) is yet, by a divine universal constitution in this particular affair of religion, so connected with those voluntary exercises which result from this mere natural assistance, that by this constitution it indiscriminately extends to all mankind, and is certainly connected with such exercises and improvements as those just mentioned, by a certain established known rule, as much as any of the laws of nature. This kind of assistance, though many Arminians call it a supernatural assistance, differs little or nothing from that natural assistance that is established by a law of nature. The law so established, is only a particular law of nature; as some of the laws of nature are more general others more particular: But this establishment, which they suppose to be by divine promise, differs nothing at all from many other particular laws of nature, except only in this circumstance of the established constitutions being revealed in the word of God, while others are left to be discovered only by experience.

The Calvinists suppose otherwise; they suppose that divine influence and operation, by which saving virtue is obtained, is entirely different from, and above common assistance, or that which is given in a course of ordinary providence, according to universally established laws of nature. They suppose a principle of saving virtue is immediately imparted and implanted by that operation, which is sovereign and efficacious in this respect, that its effect proceeds not from any established laws of nature. I mention this as an entirely different question from the other, *viz.* Whether the grace of God, by which we obtain saving virtue, is determining or decisive. For that it may be, if it be given wholly in a course of nature, or by such an operation as is limited and regulated perfectly according to established invariable laws. For none will dispute that many things are brought to pass by God in this manner, that are decisively ordered by him, and are brought to pass by his determining providence.

§ 7. The controversy, as it relates to efficacious grace in this sense, includes in it these four questions.

1. Whether saving virtue differs from common virtue, or such virtue as those have that are not in a state of salvation, in nature and kind, or only in degree and circumstances?

2. Whether a holy disposition of heart, as an internal governing principle of life and practice, be immediately implanted or infused in the soul, or only be contracted by repeated acts, and obtained by human culture and improvement?

3. Whether conversion, or the change of a person from being a vicious or wicked man, to a truly virtuous character, be instantaneous or gradual?

4. Whether the divine assistance or influence, by which men obtain true and saving virtue, be sovereign and arbitrary, or, whether God, in giving this assistance and its effects, limits himself to certain exact and stated rules revealed in his word, and established by his promises?

§ 8. Eph. i. 19, 20. "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, according to the working of his mighty power," or the effectual working, as the word signifies.—These words, *according to the effectual working of his power*, we shall find applied to conversion, to growth in grace, and to raising us up at last. You have them applied to conversion, Eph. iii. 7. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, by the *effectual working of his power*." So likewise to growth in grace, Eph. iv. 10. "The whole body increaseth with the increase of God, by the *effectual working* in the measure of every part." And to the resurrection to glory at the last day, Philip. iii. 21. "He will change our vile bodies, according to the *effectual working* of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." It was natural for the apostle to put them in mind of the power of God manifested in their conversion, as he would strengthen their faith in his power to raise them at the last day, and glorify them to eternity. Besides, what the apostle says in the continuation of his discourse, explains his meaning, and puts the matter of his intending to include the power of God manifested in their conversion, out of all doubt: as, in the very next sentence, "and you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" and every word that follows to the end of the second chapter, confirms the same thing.

§ 9. Some pretend, that in this expression, (Col. ii. 13.) *through the faith of the operation of God*, there is no respect to God's operation as the efficient cause of faith; but only to the operation of God that raised Christ, as the object of faith, which believes that power and operation as it was manifested in raising Christ, and which is believed to be sufficient to raise us up also. But that the apostle means the operation of God in giving faith, appears by verse 11, which introduces these words, where the apostle says, "In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." This phrase, *made without hands*, in scripture, always denotes God's immediate power, above the course of nature, and above second causes. Thus, when he speaks of heaven, 2 Cor. v. 1. he calls it "an house not made with hands;" and in Heb. ix. 11. the human nature of Christ, which was framed by so wonderful and supernatural a power of the Holy Ghost, is said to be a "tabernacle made without hands."*

* See Dr. Goodwin's Works, vol. i. p. 298, &c.

§ 10. It is a doctrine mightily in vogue, that God has promised his saving grace to men's sincere endeavours in praying for it, and using proper means to obtain it; and so, that it is not God's mere will that determines the matter, whether we have saving grace or not; but that the matter is left with us, to be determined by the sincerity of our endeavours.

But there is vast confusion in all talk of this kind, for want of its being well explained what is meant by *sincerity of endeavour*, and through men's deceiving themselves by using words without a meaning. I think the scripture knows of but one sort of sincerity in religion, and that is a truly pious or holy sincerity. The Bible suggests no notion of any other sort of sincere obedience, or any other sincerity of endeavours, or any doings whatsoever in religion, than doing from love to God and true love to our duty. As to those who endeavour and take pains, (let them do ever so much,) but yet do nothing freely, or from any true love to, or delight in God, or free inclination to virtue, but wholly for by-ends, and from sinister and mercenary views, as being driven and forced against their inclination, or induced by regard to things foreign; I say, respecting such as these, I find nothing in scripture that should lead us to call them honest and sincere in their endeavours. I doubt not but that the scripture promises supernatural, truly divine and saving blessings, to such a sincerity of endeavour as arises from true love to our duty. But then, as I apprehend, this is only to promise more saving grace to him that seeks it in the exercise of saving grace, agreeable to that repeated saying of our Saviour, "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." Persons, in seeking grace with sincerity, ask in faith; they seek these blessings in the exercise of a saving faith. And, I suppose, promises are made to no sincerity, but what implies this.

§ 11. On the supposition that the promises of saving grace are made to some other sincerity of endeavour than that which implies true saving piety of heart, they must be made to an undetermined condition, and so be in effect no promises at all. If there be any thing else worthy to be called sincerity, in endeavouring after holiness, but a free, pious inclination, or true regard and love to holiness, nothing better can be mentioned than this, *viz.* endeavours after holiness, from a real willingness of heart to put forth those endeavours *for the agent's own sake*, for such ends as prudence and *self-love* would propose; such as, his own eternal interest, salvation from everlasting misery, &c. But the thing that truly in this case denominates the endeavour *sincere*, is the reality of the will or disposition of heart to endeavour, and not the goodness of the will or disposition. Now, if this be the sincerity of endeavour which is meant, when men talk of its being the condition of peremptory and decisive

promises of saving grace, then it never has yet been told, and I suppose, never will or can be told, what the condition of the promise is.

The thing that needs to be determined, in order to know this condition, is, how great a degree of this sort of sincerity or real willingness of heart to endeavour, a man must have, to be entitled to the promise. For there can be no question, but that the multitudes who live in gross wickedness, and are men of a very debauched flagitious behaviour, have some degree of it; and every man whatsoever, that uses any endeavour at all for his salvation, or ever performs any religious duty, to the end that he may go to heaven, and not to hell, has this sincerity. For whatever men do voluntarily for this end, they do from a real willingness and disposition of heart to do it; for if they were not willing to do it, they would not do it. There surely are no voluntary actions performed without men's being willing to perform them. And is there any man that will assert, that God has absolutely or peremptorily promised his saving grace to any man that ever stirs hand or foot, or thinks one thought in order to his salvation?

§ 12. And, on the other hand, as to those that go furthest in their endeavours, still they fail, in numberless instances, of exercising this kind of sincerity, consisting in reality of will. For such are guilty of innumerable sins; and every man that commits sin, by so doing, instead of being sincerely willing to do his duty, sincerely wills the contrary. For so far as any actions of his are his sin, so far his will is in what he does. No action is imputed to us any further than it is voluntary, and involves the real disposition of the heart. The man, in this painful endeavour, fails continually of his duty, or (which is the same thing) of perfect obedience. And so far as he does so, he fails of sincerity of endeavour. No man is any further defective in his obedience, than as he is defective in sincerity; for there the defect lies, *viz.* in his will, and the disposition of his heart. If men were perfect in these, that would be the same thing as to be perfect in obedience, or complete in holiness. Nothing, either of omission or commission, is sin, any further than it includes the real disposition and will; and therefore, no men are any further sinful, than as they are sincere in sinning; and so far as they are sincere in sinning, so far they are deficient of sincerely endeavouring their duty. Now, therefore, where are the bounds to which men must come, in order to be entitled to the promise? Some have a faint sincerity of endeavour, who none do suppose are entitled to the promise. And those that have most sincerity of endeavour, do greatly fail of that degree of sincerity that they ought to have, or fall short of that which God requires. And there are infinite degrees between these

two classes. And if every degree or strength of endeavour is not sufficient, and yet some certain degree of it, greatly short of that which God requires, is sufficient, then let it be determined, what that degree is.

§ 13. Some have determined thus, that if men sincerely endeavour to do what they can, God has promised to help them to do more, &c. But this question remains to be resolved, whether the condition of the promise be, that he shall sincerely endeavour to do what he can, *constantly*, or only *sometimes*. For there is no man that sincerely endeavours to do his duty to the utmost constantly, with this sort of sincerity consisting in reality of will so to do. If he did, he would perfectly do his duty at all times. For, as was observed before, nothing else is required but the will; and men never fail of their duty, or commit sin, but when their real will is to sin. But, if the condition of the promise, be sincerely doing what they can *sometimes*, then it should be declared how often, or how great a part of the time of man's life, he must exercise this sincerity. It is manifest, that men fail of their duty every day, yea, continually; and, therefore, that there is a continual defect of sincerity of endeavour in the practice of duty.

If it should be said, that the condition of the promise of saving grace is, that, take one time with another, and one duty with another, the sincerity of their will should be chiefly in favour of their duty; or, in other words, that they should be sincere in endeavours to do more than half their duty, though they sincerely neglect the rest: I would inquire, where they find such promises as these in the Bible? Besides, I think it can be demonstrated, that there is not a man on earth, that ever comes up half way to what the law of God requires of him; and, consequently, that there is in all more want of sincerity, than any actual possession of it. But, whether it be so or no, how does it appear, that if men are sincere in endeavours, with respect to more than half their duty, God has promised them saving mercy and grace, though, through a defect of their sincerity, the rest be neglected?

§ 14. But if we suppose the sincerity to which divine promises are made, implies a true freedom of the heart in religious endeavours and performances, consisting in love to God and holiness, inclining our hearts to our duty for its own sake, here is something determinate and precise; as a title to the benefit promised, does not depend on any particular degree of sincerity to be found out by difficult and unsearchable rules of mathematical calculation, but on the nature of it; this sincerity being a thing of an entirely distinct nature and kind from any thing that is to be found in those men who have no interest in the promises. If men know they have this sincerity, they may know the promises are theirs, though they may be sensible,

they have very much of a contrary principle in their hearts, the operations of which are as real as of this. This is the only sincerity in religion that the scripture makes any account of. According to the word of God, then, and then only, is there a sincere universal obedience, when persons love all God's commands, and love all those things wherein holiness consists, and endeavour after obedience to every divine precept, from love and of free choice. Otherwise, in scripture account, there is nothing but sincere disobedience and rebellion, without any sincerity of the contrary. For their disobedience is of free choice, from sincere love to sin, and delight in wickedness. But their refraining from some sins, and performing some external duties, is without the least degree of free choice and sincere love.

If here it should be said, that men who have no piety of heart in a saving degree, yet may have some degree of love to virtue; and it should be insisted, that mankind are born with a moral sense, which implies a natural approbation of, and love to virtue; and, therefore, men that have not the principle of love to God, and virtue, established to that degree as to be truly pious men, and entitled to heaven, yet may have such degrees as to engage them, with ingenuous sincerity, and free inclination, to seek after further degrees of virtue, and so with a sincerity above that which has been mentioned, *viz.* a real willingness to use endeavours from fear and self-interest:—It may be replied, if this be allowed, it will not at all help the matter. For still the same question returns, *viz.* what degree of this sincerity is it that constitutes the precise condition of the promise? It is supposed, that all mankind have this moral sense; but yet it is not supposed that all mankind are entitled to the promises of saving mercy. Therefore, the promises depend, as above noticed, on the degree of sincerity, under the same difficulties, and with the same intricacies, and all the forementioned unfixedness and uncertainty. And other things concerning this sincerity, besides the degree of it, are undetermined, *viz.* how constant this degree of sincerity of endeavour must be; how long it must be continued, and how early it must be begun. Thus, it appears that, on the supposition of God's having made any promises of saving grace to the sincere endeavours of ungodly men, it will follow, that such promises are made to an undetermined condition. But a supposed promise to an undetermined condition, is truly no promise at all. It is absurd to talk of positive determinate promises made to something not determined, or to a condition that is not fixed in the promise. If the condition be not decided, there is nothing decisive in the affair. If the master of a family should give forth such a pretended promise as this to his servants, "I promise, that if any of you will do something, though I tell

you not what, I will surely give him an inheritance among my children:" would this be truly any promise at all?

§ 15. On the supposition that the promises of saving grace are made to some other sincerity of endeavour, than that which implies truly pious sincerity, the sovereign grace and will of God must determine the existence of the condition of the promises; and that in which some are distinguished from others; none supposing that all mankind, without exception, have this sincerity which is the condition of the promises. Therefore, this sincerity must be a distinguishing attainment. And how is it that some attain to it, and not others? It must be in one of these two ways; either by the sovereign gift of God's will, or by their endeavours. To say the former, is to give up the point, and to own that the sovereign grace and will of God determines the existence of the condition of the promises. But if it be said, that this distinguishing sincerity is obtained by men's own *endeavour*, then I ask, what sort of endeavour? Sincere endeavour, or insincere? None will be so absurd, as to say, that this great condition of saving promises is attained to by insincere endeavours. But if it be said, that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour is attained to by distinguishing *sincere* endeavour, this is to run round in a ridiculous circle; and still the difficulty remains, and the question returns, how the distinguishing sincerity that first of all took place in the affair came to have existence, otherwise than by the determining grace of God?

§ 16. If we suppose that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour, by which some men are interested in the promises of saving grace, and not others, to be some certain degree of love to virtue, or any thing else in the disposition or exercise of the heart, yet it must be owned, that all men either are alike by nature, as to love to virtue, or they are not. If they are not, but some have naturally a greater love to virtue than others, and this determines some, rather than others, to the requisite sincerity of endeavour after saving grace; then God determines the affair by his sovereign will; for he, and not men themselves, determines all distinguishing qualifications or advantages that men are born with. Or, if there be no difference naturally, but one man is born with the same love to virtue as another, then, how do some men first attain to more of this love to virtue than others, and so possess that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour which consists in it? To say it arises from a previous distinguishing sincerity of endeavour, attempt, desire, or will, is a contradiction. Therefore, it must proceed from the determining grace of God; which being allowed, the great point in dispute is allowed.

§ 17. The assistance by which God assists a drunkard that goes to the tavern, and there drinks excessively, or by which

he assists an adulterer or pirate in their actions, is, that he upholds the laws of nature, the laws of the nature of the human soul, whereby it is able to perform such and such acts in such order and dependence; and the laws of the union of soul and body; and moves the body in such a stated manner in consequence of such acts of the soul, and upholds the laws of motion, and causes that there shall be such and such effects in corporeal things, and, also, of men's minds in consequence of such motions. All the difference is, it seems, that the assistance which he grants in the duties of religion, is according to a newer establishment than the other, according to a method established a little later; and, also, that the method of assistance, in the one case, is written and revealed by way of promise, or covenant, and not in the other.

But if it be said, that though God has promised assistance, yet he has not promised the exact degree, as, notwithstanding his promise, he has left himself at liberty to assist some, much more than others, in consequence of the very same endeavour: I answer, that this will prove a giving up of their whole scheme, and will infallibly bring in the Calvinistical notion of sovereign and arbitrary grace; whereby some, with the very same sincerity of endeavour, with the same degree of endeavour, and the same use of means, nay, although all things are exactly equal in both cases, both as to their persons and behaviour; yet one has that success by sovereign grace and God's arbitrary pleasure, that is not given to another. If God has left himself no liberty of sovereign grace in giving success to man's endeavours, but his consequent assistance be always tied to such endeavours precisely, then man's success is just as much in his own power, and is in the same way the fruit of his own doings, as the effect and fulfilment of his endeavours to commit adultery or murder; and indeed, much more. For his success in those endeavours may be providentially disappointed. Although particular motions follow such and such acts of will, in such a state of body, exactly according to certain laws of nature; yet a man's success in such wickedness, is not at all tied to his endeavours by any divine establishment, as the Arminians suppose success is to man's endeavours after conversion. For the Spirit of God, by assisting in the alleged manner, becomes not the efficient cause of those things, as the scriptures do certainly represent him. If God be not the proper bestower, author, and efficient cause of virtue, then the greatest benefits flow not from him; are not owing to his goodness; nor have we him to thank for them.

§ 18. Dr. Whitby's inconsistence appears in that one while, when he is disputing against the decree of election, he maintains that the epistles, where the apostle speaks to the elect, are not written to the converted only; because then it suits

his turn, that the persons addressed should not be converted. But, afterward, when disputing against efficacious grace, he maintains, that where the apostle says, "God worketh in you both to will and to do," &c. Philip. ii. 13. he speaks only to them that are converted, p. 288. Again, when it suits the doctor's turn, when writing about perseverance, then all whom the apostles write to are true saints. As particularly those the apostle Peter writes to, that had *precious faith*, p. 399. And the Galatians addressed in Paul's epistle, p. 401, 402.

§ 19. Arminians argue, that God has obliged himself to bestow a holy and saving disposition, on certain conditions, and that what is given in regeneration, is given either for natural men's asking, or for the diligent improvement of common grace; because, otherwise, it would not be our fault that we are without it, nor our virtue that we have it. But if this reasoning is just, the holy qualities obtained by the regenerate, are only the fruits of virtue, not virtues themselves. All the virtue lies in asking, and in the diligent improvement of common grace!

§ 20. Prov. xxi. 1. "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will." This shows, that the Arminian notion of liberty of will, is inconsistent with the scripture notion of God's providence and government of the world. See, also, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn me, and I shall be turned." Matt. vii. 18. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Let us understand this how we will, it destroys the Arminian notion of liberty, and virtue and vice. For, if it means only a great difficulty, then so much the less liberty, and, therefore, so much the less virtue or vice. And the preceding verse would be false, which says, "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit," &c. Rom. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9. "For to be carnally minded, is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace: because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The design of the apostle, in this place, overthrows Arminian notions of liberty, virtue, and vice. It appears, from scripture, that God gives such assistance to virtue and virtuous acts, as to be properly a determining assistance, so as to determine the effect; which is inconsistent with the Arminian notion of liberty. The scripture shows, that God's influence in the case is such, that he is the cause of the effect: he causes it to be; which shows that his influence determines the matter, whether it shall be or

not. Otherwise, innumerable expressions of scripture are exceedingly improper, and altogether without a meaning.

§ 21. Dr. Whitby's notion of the assistance of the Spirit, is of the same sort with inspiration. Whereas, that which I suppose is the true notion, is entirely different. Consequently, their notion is much more enthusiastical, does much better agree with, and much more expose to pernicious enthusiasm, than ours. Hence we find, that the grossest enthusiasts are generally Arminians in the doctrines of free will, &c.

§ 22. Scripture expressions are every where contrary to the Arminian scheme, according to all use of language in the world in these days. But then they have their refuge here. They say, the ancient figures of speech are exceedingly diverse from ours; and that we, in this distant age, cannot judge at all of the true sense of expressions used so long ago, but by a skill in antiquity, and being versed in ancient history, and critically skilled in the ancient languages; not considering that scriptures were written for us in these ages on whom the ends of the world are come; yea, were designed chiefly for the latter age of the world, in which they shall have their chief, and, comparatively, almost all their effect. They were written for God's people in those ages, of whom, at least ninety-nine in an hundred must be supposed incapable of such knowledge, by their circumstances and education; and nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand of God's people, that hitherto have been saved by the scriptures. It is easy, by certain methods of interpretation, to refine and criticise any book to a sense most foreign to the mind of the author.

§ 23. The vast pretences of Arminians to an accurate and clear view of the scope and design of the sacred penmen, and a critical knowledge of the original, will prove for ever vain and insufficient to help them against such clear evidence as the scripture exhibits concerning efficacious grace. I desire it may be shown, if it can be, that ever any terms fuller and stronger, are used more frequently, or in greater variety, to signify God's being the author, efficient and bestower of any kind of benefit, than as to the bestowment of true virtue or goodness of heart, the giving the means of grace and salvation; the giving Christ, and providing means of salvation in him? Yea, I know of no one thing in scripture wherein such significant, strong expressions are used, in so great variety, or one half so often, as the bestowment of this benefit of true goodness and piety of heart. But, after all, we must be faced down in it with vast confidence, that the scriptures do not imply any more than only exhibiting *means* of instruction, leaving the determining and proper causing of the effect wholly with man, as the only proper efficient and determining cause; and that the current of scripture is all against us: and that it is be-

cause we do not understand language, and are bigots and fools for imagining any such thing as that the scriptures say any thing of that nature; and because the divines on our side do not understand Greek, and do not lay the scripture before them, nor mind the scope of scripture, nor consider the connexion, &c. &c. Perhaps it will be said, that every one of those scriptures, which are brought to prove efficacious grace, may have another interpretation, found out by careful and critical examination. But, alas! is that the way of the Most High's instructing mankind, to use such a multitude of expressions in different languages and various different ages, all which, in their natural and most common acceptation, in all languages, nations and ages, must undoubtedly be understood in a particular sense; yea, that the whole thread and current of all that God says according to the use of speech among mankind, tends to lead to such an understanding, and so unavoidably leads his people in all ages into such an understanding; but yet, that he means no such thing; intending only that the true meaning should not be found out, but by the means of acute criticism, which might possibly hit upon the strange, unusual, and surprising meaning?

§ 24. Instead of persons being the determining and efficient causes of their own virtue and piety, after all the moral means God uses with man: Let us suppose some third person between God and the subject of this gift of virtue, to be in the very same manner the sovereignly determining cause and efficient of virtue; that he had power to bestow it on us, or cause us to be the subjects of it, just in the same manner as the Arminians suppose we ourselves have power to be the causes of our being the subjects of virtue; and that it depended on this third person's free-will, just in the same manner as now they suppose our having virtue depends on our own free-will; and that God used moral means with that third person to bestow virtue on us, just in the same manner that he uses moral means to persuade us to cause virtue in ourselves, and the moral means had the like tendency to operate on his will as on ours; but finally, it was left entirely to his free-will to be the sole determining cause whether we should have virtue, without any such influence on his will as in the least to insure his sovereignty, and arbitrary disposal, and perfectly free self-determination; and it should be left contingent, whether he would bestow it or not; and, in these circumstances, this third person should happen to determine in our favour, and bestow virtue: Now, I ask, would it be proper to ascribe the matter so wholly to God, in such strong terms, and in such a great variety; to ascribe it so entirely to him as his gift; to pray to him beforehand for it; to give him thanks, to give him all the glory, &c.? On the contrary, would not this determining cause, whose ar-

bitrary, self-determined, self-possessed sovereign will, decides the matter, be properly looked upon as the main cause, vastly the most proper cause, the truest author and bestower of the benefit? would not he be, as it were, all in the cause? would not the glory properly belong to him, on whose pleasure the determination of the matter properly depended?

§ 25. By regeneration, being new creatures, raised from death in sin, in the New Testament, is now meant according to Dr. Taylor, merely persons being brought into the state and privileges of professing Christians. When Christ says unto Nicodemus, John iii. 3. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" he does not mean merely, that unless a man be brought to a participation of the new state and privileges of the Christian church, he cannot enter on the possession and privileges of the Christian church; for that would be nonsense, and only to say, unless a man be born again, he cannot be born again; or, unless a man enter into the new state of things as erected by the Messiah, he cannot enter on the new state of things as erected by the Messiah. Nor can he mean, that unless a man be a professing Christian, he cannot see the future and eternal privileges of the kingdom of heaven; for he supposes many heathens will see the kingdom of God in that sense. And how unreasonable would it be to suppose that Christ would teach this doctrine of the necessity of being instated in his new-modelled church, as such a great, important, and main doctrine of his! See how evidently being born of God signifies something else than a being brought into the state of professing Christians; 1 John ii. 29. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him." Chap. iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Chap. iv. 7. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Chap. v. 4. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." Verse 18. "We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

So it is exceeding apparent, that knowing God, and being of God, and in God, having this hope in him, &c. mean something beside our Christian profession, and principles and privileges. 1 John ii. 3, &c. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. 3. "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Chap. iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Chap. iv. 12. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."

§ 26. Why does the apostle say, concerning apostates, "*they were not of us:* if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us:" if it be, as Dr. Taylor supposes, that professing Christians are indeed of the society of Christians to all intents and purposes, have all their privileges, are truly the children of God, members of Christ, of the household of God, saints, believers that have obtained like precious faith, are all one body, have one spirit, one faith, one inheritance, have their hearts purified and sanctified, are all the children of light, are all of the household of God, fellow-citizens with the saints, have all fellowship with Christ, &c.?

§ 27. It is true, the nation of the Jews are in the Old Testament said to be elected, called, created, made, formed, redeemed, delivered, saved, bought, purchased, begotten. But particular Jews are no where so spoken of, at least with reference to the same thing, *viz.* their national redemption when they were brought out of Egypt, &c.

David, in the book of Psalms, though he is so abundant there in giving thanks to God for his mercies, and is also so frequent in praising God for redeeming his people out of Egypt, and the salvation he wrought for the nation and Church of Israel at that time; yet he never once blesses God, (having respect to that salvation,) that God had chosen him and redeemed him, bought him, regenerated him; never (having reference to that affair) speaks in the language of the apostle, "He loved me, and gave himself for me;" though he often speaks of the blessedness of those men God had chosen, and caused to come nigh unto him, agreeably to the language of the New Testament, and often blesses God for redeeming and saving him in particular; but never, in any of these things, has he respect to those national privileges; nor indeed any other of the penmen of the Psalms; which is very strange, if the privilege of being bought, made, created, &c. as applied to the nation of the Jews, be that which the apostle in the New Testament applies to himself in particular, and which this and the other apostles applied to many other particular persons.

§ 28. That professing Christians are said to be sanctified, washed, &c. does not argue, that all professing Christians are so in fact. For Taylor himself says, "it should be carefully observed, that it is very common in the sacred writings, to express not only our Christian privileges, but also the duty to which they oblige, in the present or preterperfect tense; or to speak of that as done, which only ought to be done, and which, in fact may possibly never be done: as in Matt. v. 13. "Ye are the salt of the earth," that is, ye ought to be. Rom. ii. 4. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance;" that is ought to lead thee: chap. vi. 2. chap. viii. 9. Col. iii. 3. this overthrows

all his supposed proofs, that those which he calls antecedent blessings, do really belong to all professing Christians.

§ 29. The case was quite otherwise in the Christian church with regard to election, redemption, creation, &c., from what it was with the Jews. With the Jews, election, their redemption out of Egypt, their creation, was a national thing; it began with them as a nation, and descended, as it were, from the nation, to particular persons. Particular persons were first of the nation and church of the Jews; so, by that means, had an interest in their election, redemption, &c., that God wrought of old. The being of the nation and church of Israel, was the ground of a participation in these privileges. But it is evidently contrariwise in Christians. With regard to them, the election, redemption, creation, regeneration, &c., are personal things. They begin with particular persons, and ascend to public societies. Men are first redeemed, bought, created, regenerated, and, by that means, become members of the Christian church; and this is the ground of their membership. Paul's regeneration, and Christ's loving him, and giving himself for him, was the foundation of his being of the Christian church, that holy nation, peculiar people, &c.; whereas David being one of the nation of Israel, is the proper ground of his participation in Israel's redemption out of Egypt, and of that birth and formation of the people. It is apparent the case was thus. It cannot be otherwise. It is evident the new creation, regeneration, calling, and justification, are personal things, because they are by personal influences; influences of God's Spirit on particular persons, and personal qualifications.

§ 30. It will follow from Taylor's scheme, that Simon, the sorcerer, had an interest in all the antecedent blessings. Yet the apostle tells him, he was at that time in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. If he was really justified, washed, cleansed, sanctified; how was he at that time in the bond of iniquity? Justification, forgiveness, &c., is a release from the bond of iniquity. If the heart be purified by faith, it does not remain in the gall of bitterness.

§ 31. Saving grace differs from common grace, in nature and kind. To suppose only a gradual difference, would not only be to suppose, that some, in a state of damnation, are, within an infinitely little, as good as some in a state of salvation, (which greatly disagrees with the Arminian notion of men's being saved by their own virtue and goodness;) but this, taken with the Arminian notion of men's falling from grace, will naturally lead us to determine, that many that are once in a state of salvation, may be in such a state, and out of it, scores of times in a very short space. For though a person is in a state of salvation, he may be but just in it, and may be infinitely near the limits between a state of salvation and dam-

nation; and, as the habits of grace are, according to that scheme, only contracted and raised by consideration and exercise, and the exertion of the strength of the mind, and are lost when a man falls from grace by the intermission or cessation of these, and by contrary acts and exercises; and, as the habits and principles of virtue are raised and sunk, brought into being and abolished by those things, and both their degree and their being wholly depend on them, the consequence will naturally be, that when a man is first raised to that degree of a virtuous disposition, as to be in a state of salvation, and the degree of virtue is almost infinitely near the dividing line, it will naturally be liable to be a little raised or sunk every hour, according as the thoughts and exercises of the mind are; as the mercury in the thermometer, or barometer, is never perfectly at rest, but is always rising or subsiding, according to the weight of the atmosphere, or the degree of heat.

§ 32. The dispute about grace being resistible or irresistible, is perfect nonsense. For, if the effect of grace is upon the *will*, then it is nonsense; except it be proper to say, that a man with his will can resist his own will, or except it be possible for him to desire to resist his own will; that is, except it be possible for a man to will a thing, and not will it, at the same time, and so far as he does will it. Or, if you speak of enlightening grace, and say this grace is upon the understanding, it is nothing but the same nonsense in other words. For then the sense runs thus, that a man, after he has seen so plainly that a thing is best for him that he wills it, yet he can, at the same time, nill it. If you say he can will any thing he pleases, this is most certainly true; for who can deny, that a man can will any thing he doth already will? And so, with the same reason, we may say, there is another will to please; to please to will; and so on to a thousand. Wherefore, to say that the man could have willed otherwise, if he had pleased, is just all one as to say, that if he had willed otherwise, then we might be sure he could will otherwise.

§ 33. Those that deny infusion of grace by the Holy Spirit, must, of necessity, deny the Spirit to do any thing at all. By the Spirit's infusing, let be meant what it will, those who say there is no infusion, contradict themselves. For they say the Spirit doth something in the soul; that is, he causeth some motion, or affection, or apprehension, to arise in the soul, that, at the same time, would not be there without him. Now, God's Spirit doeth what he doeth; he doth as much as he doth; or he causeth in the soul as much as he causeth, let that be how little soever. So much as is purely the effect of his immediate motion, that is the effect of his immediate motion, let that be what it will; and so much is infused, how little soever that be. This is self-evident. For, suppose the Spirit of

God only to assist the natural powers, then there is something done betwixt them. Men's own powers do something, and God's Spirit doth something; only they work together. Now, that part which the Spirit doth, how little soever it be, is infused. So that they who deny infused habits, own that part of the habit is infused. For they say, the Holy Spirit assists the man in acquiring the habit; so that it is acquired rather sooner than it would be otherwise. So that part of the habit is owing to the Spirit; some of the strength of the habit was infused, and another part is owing to the natural powers of the man. Or, if you say, that it is all owing to the natural power assisted, how do you mean assisted? To act more lively and vigorously than otherwise? Then that liveliness and vigorousness must be infused; which is a habit, and, therefore, an infused habit. It is grace, and, therefore, infused grace. Grace consists very much in a principle that causes vigorousness and activity in action.

§ 34. Concerning what the Arminians say, that these are speculative points: I answer, all devotion greatly depends on a sense and acknowledgment of our dependence on God. But this is one of the very chief things belonging to our dependence on God: how much stress do the scriptures lay on our dependence on God? All assistance of the Spirit of God whatsoever, that is by any present influence or effect of the Spirit; any thing at all that a person converted from sin to God is the subject of, through any immediate influence of the Spirit of God upon him, or any thing done by the Spirit, since the completing and confirming the canon of the scriptures, must be done by a physical operation either on the soul or body. The Holy spirit of God does something to promote virtue in men's hearts, and to make them good, *beyond* what the angels can do. But the angels can present motives; can excite ideas of the words of promises and threatenings, &c. and can persuade in this way by moral means; as is evident, because the devils in this way promote vice.

§ 35. There is no objection made to God's producing any effects, or causing any events, by any immediate interposition, producing effects arbitrarily, or by the immediate efforts of his will, but what lies equally against his ordering it so, that any effects should be produced by the immediate interposition of men's will, to produce effects otherwise than the established laws of nature would have produced without men's arbitrary interposition. Such arguments as are founded on the established laws of nature, if they are valid against any interposition at all, will prevail against all interposition of God or man, and against the interposition of God ever to bring the world to an end, or amend it; and prove that all shall be according to general laws. And they might as well argue that the making of the

world too was by general laws. If it be said, that it is of great importance and absolute necessity, that God should at last interpose and rectify the course of nature: I answer, this is yielding the point, that, in cases of great importance, it is reasonable to suppose there may be an interposition that may be arbitrary, and not by general laws.

§ 36. The nature of virtue being a positive thing, can proceed from nothing but God's immediate influence, and must take its rise from creation or infusion by God. For it must be either from that, or from our own choice and production, either at once, or gradually, by diligent culture. But it cannot begin, or take its rise from the latter, *viz.* our choice, or voluntary diligence. For if there exist nothing at all of the nature of virtue before, it cannot come from cultivation; for by the supposition there is nothing of the nature of virtue to cultivate, it cannot be by repeated and multiplied acts of virtuous choice, till it becomes an habit. For there can be no one virtuous choice, unless God immediately gives it. The first virtuous choice, or a disposition to it, must be immediately given, or it must proceed from a preceding choice. If the first virtuous act of will or choice be from a preceding act of will or choice, that preceding act of choice must be a virtuous act of choice, which is contrary to the supposition. For then there would be a preceding act of choice before the first virtuous act of choice. And if it be said the first virtuous act of choice is from a preceding act of will, which is not virtuous, this is absurd For an act of will not virtuous, cannot produce another act of will of a nature entirely above itself, having something positive in it, any more than motion can produce thought or understanding; or the collision of two bodies can produce thought; or stones and lead can produce a spirit; or nothing can produce something.

§ 37. As to man's inability to convert himself.—In them that are totally corrupt, there can be no tendency towards their making their hearts better, till they begin to repent of the badness of their hearts. For if they do not repent, they still approve of it; and that tends to maintain their badness and confirm it. But they cannot begin sincerely to repent of the badness of their hearts till their hearts begin to be better; for repentance consists in a change of the mind and heart. So that it is not men's repentance that first gives rise to their having a better heart; and therefore it cannot be any tendency in them to make their hearts better. The heart can have no tendency to make itself better, till it begins to have a better tendency; for therein consists its badness, *viz.* its having no good tendency or inclination. And to begin to have a good tendency, or, which is the same thing, a tendency and inclination to be better, is the same thing as to begin already to be

better. And therefore the heart's inclination to be good, cannot be the thing that first gives rise to its being made good. For its inclination to be better, is the same thing with its becoming better. If there be any immediate influence or action of the Spirit of God at all on any created beings, in any part of the universe, since the days of the apostles, it is physical. If it be in exciting ideas of motives, or in any respect assisting or promoting any effect, still it is physical; and every whit as much so, as if we suppose the temper and nature of the heart is immediately changed. And it is as near akin to a miracle. If the latter be miraculous, so is the former.

§ 38. Who ever supposed, that the term *irresistible* was properly used with respect to that power by which an infant is brought into being; meaning irresistible by the infant? Or who ever speaks of a man's waking out of a sound sleep *irresistibly;* meaning, that he cannot resist awaking? Or who says, that Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth irresistibly? See what I have said of the use of such terms as *irresistible*, *unfrustrable*, &c. in my inquiry about liberty.—The opponents of efficacious grace and physical operation, may be challenged to show that it is possible that any creature should become righteous without a physical operation, either a being created with the habit of righteousness, or its being immediately infused. See what I have written in my book of *original sin*, in those sections wherein I vindicate the doctrine of original righteousness, and argue, that if Adam was not created righteous, no way can be invented, how he could ever become righteous.

§ 39. Reason shows, that the first existence of a principle of virtue cannot be from man himself, nor in any created being whatsoever; but must be immediately given from God; or that otherwise it never can be obtained, whatever this principle be, whether love to God, or love to men. It must either be from God, or be an habit contracted by repeated acts. But it is most absurd to suppose, that the first existence of the principle of holy action, should be preceded by a course of holy actions. Because there can be no holy action without a principle, or holy inclination. There can be no act done from love, that shall be the cause of first introducing the very existence of love.

§ 40. There are no sort of benefits that are so much the subject of the *promises* of scripture, as the bestowment of virtue, or benefits which imply it. How often is the faith of the Gentiles, or their coming into the Christian church, promised to Christ in the Old Testament; Isaiah xlix. 6. and many other places; and he has promised it to his church, chap. xlix. 18—21. and innumerable other places. See Rom. xv. 12, 13. What

a promise have we, Isaiah lx. 21. "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified,"—compared with the next chapter, 3d verse, "That they may be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." See also verse 8. of the same chapter. Likewise chapter lx. 17, 18. "I will make thy officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness; violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy border, but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." Here it is promised, that the rulers shall be righteous; and then, in the 21st verse following, it is promised that the people shall be so. The change of men to be of a peaceable disposition is promised, as in places innumerable, so in Isaiah xi. 6—11. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid," &c. Isa. lv. 5. "Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." Jer. iii. 15. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." This implies a promise that there should be such pastors in being, and that they should be faithful to feed the people with knowledge and understanding. Jer. x. 23. "The way of man is not in himself." Stebbing owns, that on Arminian principles, conversion depending on the determination of free will, it is possible, in its own nature, that none should ever be converted, (p. 235.) Then all the promises of virtue, of the revival of religion, &c. are nothing. Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,"—compared with Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise." Which shows the force and meaning of such a phraseology to be, that God alone can be the doer of it; and that if he undertakes it, it will be effectually done. Jer. xxxi. 32—35. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord;) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear

me for ever, for the good of them and their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good. But I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxiii. 8. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me." Ezek. xi. 18—20. "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abomination thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Ezek. xxxvi. 25—33. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God: and I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, and ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded." And ver. 36. the whole is concluded with "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Zech. xii. 10. to the end: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," &c.

§ 41. We are told, Job xxviii. 28. that "the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." The same is also abundantly declared in other places. But it is equally declared, that God is the author and giver of wisdom, and that he is the author wholly and only; which is denied of other things. It is, also, abundantly declared in this 28th chapter of Job, that it cannot be obtained of any creature by

any means; and it is implied in the end of the chapter, that it is God that gives wisdom, as is asserted Prov. ii. 6. "For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

§ 42. That expression, Rom. i. 7. and 1 Cor. i. 2. and elsewhere, *called to be saints*, implies, that God makes the distinction. Compare this with what Christ says, John x. 27: "My sheep hear my voice." Verse 16. "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them, also, must I bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. to the end: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of, &c. That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus," &c. According to the Arminian scheme, it ought to have been,—I have planted, and Apollos watered, and God hath planted and watered more especially. For we have done it only as his servants. But you, yourselves, have given the increase; the fruit has been left to your free will: Agreeably to what the Arminians insist on, in what they say upon the parable of the vineyard which God planted in a fruitful hill, &c., and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and says, what could I have done more unto my vineyard?

§ 43. *Sincerity*, itself, is spoken of as coming from God. Phil. i. 10. "That ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence in the day of Christ." And elsewhere God is represented as "creating a clean heart, renewing a right spirit, giving an heart of flesh," &c. The apostle "gives thanks for the faith and love of the Colossians, their being delivered from the power of darkness, &c.; and prays that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and might, agreeable to their knowledge, being fruitful in every good work; and for their perseverance, and that they might be made meet for the reward of the saints." Col. i. 3, 4, 9—13. This argues all to flow from God as the giver. Their first faith, and their love that their faith was attended with, and their knowledge and spiritual wisdom and prudence, and walking worthy of the Lord, and universal obedience, and doing every good work, and increasing their grace, and being strengthened in it, and their perseverance and cheerfulness in their obedience, and being made meet for their reward, *all are from God.* They are from God as the determining cause; else, why does the apostle pray that God would bestow or effect these things, if they be not at his determination, whether they shall have them or not? He speaks of God's glorious power as manifested in the bestowment of these things. Col. ii. 13. "And you being dead in your sins, and

the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that hath called you; who, also, will do it." 2 Thess. i. 3, 4. "We are bound to thank God always for you, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we glory in you—for your faith and patience in all your persecutions and tribulations." Verses 11, 12. "Wherefore we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

§ 44. The apostle thanks God for his own *prayers*, and for those of others; 2 Tim. i. 3. If they were from God, then, doubtless, also, our prayers for ourselves, our very prayers for the Spirit, are from him. The prophet ascribes persons' prayers to their having the spirit of grace and supplication. True acceptable prayer is spoken of, Rom. viii., as being the language of the Spirit; not that I suppose the very words are indited, but the disposition is given. 2 Tim. i. 7. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." Philem. iii. 4. "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and toward all saints." Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, and to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." Jam. i. 16—18. "Do not err, my beloved brethren: Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." The scope of the apostle, and the connexion of his discourse, plainly shows, that the apostle means to assert, that all moral good is from God. In the preceding verses, he was warning those he wrote to, not to lay their sins, or pride, or lusts, to the charge of God; and, on that occasion, he would have them be sensible, that every good gift is from God, and no evil; that God is the Father of *light*, and only of light; and that no darkness is from him, because there is no darkness in him; no change from light to darkness; no, not

the least shadow. But, if all moral good is from God, cometh down from him, and is his gift, then the very first good determination of the will, and every good improvement of assistance, is so.

§ 45. Philip. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The plain meaning of the text is, that it is God, by his operation and efficiency, who gives the will, and, also, enables us to put that will in execution; or that he, by his efficiency, gives both the will and the deed. And this will remain the indisputable meaning of the text, notwithstanding criticism on the word ενεργων, &c. I question, whether any word can be found, in all the Greek language, more expressive and significant of an effectual operation. Wherever the words effectual and effectually are used in our translation of the Bible, this is the word used in the original.

§ 46. By the disposing or determining cause of a benefit, I mean, a cause that disposes, orders, or determines, whether we shall be actually possessed of the benefit or not; and the same cause may be said to be an efficacious or effectual cause. That cause only can be said to be an efficacious cause, whose efficiency determines, reaches, and produces the effect. A being may be the determiner and disposer of an event, and not properly an efficient or efficacious cause. Because, though he determines the futurity of the event, yet there is no positive efficiency or power of the cause that reaches and produces the effect; but merely a withholding of efficiency or power.

Concerning the giver's being a disposer or determiner, let us consider that objection, that when a man gives to a beggar, he does but offer, and leaves it with the determination of the beggar's will, whether he will be possessed of the thing offered. In answer to this, I observe, that in the instance before us, the very thing given is virtue, and this consists in the determination of the inclination and will. Therefore the determination of the will is the gift of God; otherwise virtue is not his gift, and why should we pray to God to give us such a determination of will, when that proceeds not from him but ourselves?

§ 47. Arminians make a great ado about the phrase *irresistible grace*. But the grand point of controversy really is, what is it that determines, disposes and decides the matter, whether there shall be saving virtue in the heart or not; and much more properly, whether the grace of God in the affair be *determining grace*, than whether it be *irresistible*. Our case is indeed extremely unhappy, if we have such a book to be our grand and only rule, our light and directory, that is so exceeding perplexed, dark, paradoxical, and hidden, every where in the manner of expression, as the scriptures must be, to make them consistent with Arminian opinions: by whatever means

this has come to pass, whether through the distance of ages, diversity of customs, or by any other cause. It is to be considered that this is given for the rule of all ages; and not only of the most learned and accurate and penetrating critics, and men of vast inquiry and skill in antiquity, but for all sorts of persons, of every age and nation, learned and unlearned. If this be true, how unequal and unfit is the provision that is made! How improper to answer the end designed! If men will take subterfuge in pretences of a vast alteration of phrase, through diversity of ages and nations, what may not men hide themselves from under such a pretence! No words will hold and secure them. It is not in the nature of words to do it. At this rate, language in its nature has no sufficiency to communicate ideas.

§ 48. In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do *some*, and we do the *rest*. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, *viz.* our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive, and wholly active.—In the scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do."

§ 49. When Christ says, John x. "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold;" it is unreasonable to suppose he meant all in the world, that were then of a *teachable* disposition. Many of them would be dead before the gospel could be spread among the Gentiles; and many of the Gentiles were doubtless brought in, that at that time were not of a teachable disposition. And unless God's decrees and efficacious grace made a difference, it is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that multitudes in countries where the apostles never preached, were as teachable as in those countries where they did go, and so they never were brought in according to the words of Christ, "Those whom the Father hath given me, shall come unto me." Christ speaks of the Father's giving them as a thing past; John x. 29. "My Father which *gave* them me." When Christ speaks of men being drawn to him, he does not mean any preparation of disposition antecedent to their having the gospel, but a being converted to Christ by faith in the gospel, revealing Christ crucified, as appears by John xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The

apostle says, "without faith it is impossible to please God." Therefore it is impossible that persons should have, before faith, those virtues that are peculiarly amiable to God, as Stebbing supposes.

§ 50. The apostle James tells us, that if we do not pray in *faith*, we have no reason to expect to receive any thing, and particularly not to receive divine wisdom. And therefore, it is unreasonable to suppose with Stebbing, that persons first pray, even before they have a spirit of meekness, and teachableness, and humility, faith or repentance, and that God has promised to answer these prayers. Christian virtues being every where spoken of as the special effect of grace, and often called by the name of grace, by reason of its being the peculiar fruit of grace, does not well consist with the Arminian notion of assistance, *viz.* that God is obliged to give us asssistance sufficient for salvation from hell, because, forsooth, it is not just to damn us for the want of that which we have not sufficient means to escape: and then, after God has given these sufficient means, our improving them well is wholly from ourselves, our own will, and not from God; and the thing wherein Christian virtue consists, is wholly and entirely ourselves.

§ 51. I would ask, how it is possible for us to come by virtue at first, according to Arminian principles; or, how we come by our first virtue: Is it natural? Is there some virtuous disposition with which we come into the world? But how is this virtue? That which men bring into the world is necessary, and what men had no opportunity to prevent, and it is not at all from our freewill. How, then, can there be any virtue in it, according to their principles? Or, is our first virtue wholly from the influence of the Spirit of God, without any endeavour or effort of ours, to be partly the cause of it? This, to be sure, cannot be, by their principles; for, according to them, that which is not at all from us, or that we are not the causes of, is no virtue of ours. Is it wholly from our endeavours, without any assistance at all, of the Spirit? This is contrary to what they pretend to hold; for, they assert, that without divine assistance there can be no virtue.—*Stebbing*, pages 27, 28, and pages 20, 21, and other places. If they say it is partly from the influence of the Spirit of God, and partly from our own endeavours, I would inquire whether those endeavours that our first virtue partly arises from, be good endeavours, and at all virtuous? If the answer be in the affirmative, this contradicts the supposition. For I am now inquiring what the *first* virtue is. The first virtue we have, certainly does not arise from virtuous endeavours preceding that first virtue. For that is to suppose virtue before the first virtue. If the answer be, that they are no good endeavours, they have nothing at all of the nature of the exercise of any good disposition, or any

good aim and intention, or any virtuous sincerity; I ask, what tendency can such efforts of the mind, as are wholly empty of all goodness, have to produce true moral goodness in the heart?

Can an action, that in principles and ends has no degree of moral good, have a tendency to beget a habit of acting from good principles and for good ends? For instance, can a man's doing something purely to satisfy some sensitive appetite of his own, or to increase his own worldly profit, have any kind of tendency to beget a habit of doing something from true disinterested benevolence, or to excite to any act from such a principle? Certainly an act perfectly void of benevolence, has no more tendency to produce either an habit or act of benevolence, than nothing has a tendency to produce something.

§ 52. Stebbing supposes the assistance God gives, or the operation of the Spirit in order to faith, is to give a good and honest heart, prepared to receive and well improve the word; as particularly, meekness, humility, teachableness, &c. And supposes that these effects of the Spirit are to be obtained by prayer; but yet allows, that the prayer must be acceptably made, (page 106.) which supposes that some degree of virtue must be exercised in prayer. And it may be presumed that they will allow, that there are multitudes of men, who at present are so wicked, so destitute of virtue, that they have not virtue enough for acceptable prayer to God. They have not now so much respect to God or their own souls, as to incline them to pray at all. Now, I would inquire, how these men shall come by virtue, in order to acceptably praying to God? Or how is it within their reach by virtue of God's promises? Or how can they come by it, save by God's sovereign arbitrary grace? Shall they pray to God for it, and so obtain it? But this is contrary to the supposition. For it is supposed, that they now have not virtue enough to pray acceptably, and this is the very thing inquired, how they come by the virtue necessary in order to their making acceptable prayer? Or shall they work the virtue in themselves wholly without God's assistance? But this is contrary to what they pretend, *viz.* that all virtue is from God, or by the grace and assistance of God, which they allow to be evident by that scripture, "*without me ye can do nothing.*" Or, is God obliged to give it, or to assist them to obtain it, without their praying for it, or having virtue enough to ask it of him? That they do not pretend. For they suppose the condition of our obtaining the heavenly Spirit is our seeking, asking, &c.; and besides, if God gives it without their first seeking it, that will make God the first determining efficient, yea, the mere and sole author of it, without their doing any thing toward it, without their so much as seeking or asking for it: which would be entirely to overthrow

their whole scheme, and would by their principles, make this virtue no virtue at all, because not at all owing to them, or any endeavours of theirs.

§ 53. If they reply, they must in the first place *consider:* they are capable of consideration; and if they would consider as they ought and may, they would doubtless pray to God, and ask his help; and every man naturally has some virtue in him, which proper consideration would put into exercise so far as to cause him to pray in some measure acceptably, without any new gift from God:—I answer, this is inconsistent with many of their principles. It is so, that men should naturally have some virtue in them. For what is natural is necessary: is not from themselves and their own endeavours and free acts; but prevents them all, and therefore cannot be their virtue. If they say, consideration will not stir up any virtue that is naturally in them, to cause them to pray virtuously; but God has obliged himself to give virtue enough to enable them to pray and seek acceptably, if they will consider: I answer, this is more than they pretend. If they say, serious consideration itself is some degree of seeking their own good, and there is an implicit prayer in it to the supreme Being to guide them into the way to their happiness: I answer, if it be supposed that there is an implicit prayer in their consideration, still they allow that prayer must be in some measure acceptable prayer, in order to its being entitled to an answer; and consequently must have some degree of virtuous respect to God, &c.; and if so, then the same question returns with all the aforementioned difficulties over again, *viz.* How came the profane, thoughtless, vain, inconsiderate person by this new virtue, this new respect to God, that he ever exercises in this serious consideration and implicit prayer?

If they say, there is no necessity of supposing any implicit prayer in the first consideration; and yet, if the wicked, profane, careless person, makes a good improvement of what grace he has, in proper consideration, or otherwise, God has obliged himself to give him more, in that general promise, "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance:" Then I answer, here is new virtue in his making a good improvement of what common assistance he has, which before he neglected, and made no good improvement of. This is contrary to what they pretend. Or is God obliged to give new assistance in order to this new virtue by any promise? If he be, what is the condition of the promise? It is absurd to say, making a good improvement of what assistance they have; for that is the thing we are inquring after, *viz.* How comes he by that new virtue, making a good improvement of what he has, when before he had not virtue enough to make such an

improvement? Of whatever kind this assistance is, whether it be some afflictive dispensation of Providence, or some other outward dispensation or inward influence, the difficulty is the same. How becomes God obliged to give this assistance; and what is the conditon of the promise?

The answer must be, that this new virtue is without any new assistance given, and is from God no otherwise than as the former neglected assistance or grace subserves it. But the question is, whence comes the virtue of not neglecting, but improving that former assistance? Is it proper to say that a man is assisted to improve assistance by the assistance improved? Suppose a number of men were in the water in danger of drowning, and a friend on shore throws out a cord amongst them, but all of them for a while neglect it; at length one of them takes hold of it, and makes improvement of it; and any should inquire, how that man came by the prudence and virtue of improving the cord, when others did not, and he before had neglected it; would it be a proper answer to say, that he that threw out the rope, assisted him wisely to improve the rope, by throwing out the rope to him? This would be an absurd answer. The question is not, how he came by his *opportunity*, but how he came by the *disposition* of improvement. His friend on shore gave him the opportunity, and this is all. The man's virtue in improving it was not at all from him. Would it not be exceedingly impertinent, in such a case, to set forth from time to time, how this man's discretion, and virtue and prudence, was the gift of his friend on the shore, his mere gift, the fruit of his purpose and mere good pleasure, and of his power; and yet that it was of his own will? Man's virtue, according to Arminian principles, must consist wholly and entirely in improving assistance: For in that only consists the exercise of their freewill in the affair, and not in their having the assistance, although their virtue must be by their principles entirely from themselves, and God has no hand in it. From the latter part of the above discourse, it appears that, according to Arminian principles, men's virtue is altogether of themselves, and God has no hand at all in it.

§ 54. When I say that the acts and influences of the Spirit determine the effects, it is not meant that man has nothing to do to determine in the affair. The soul of man undoubtedly in every instance, does voluntarily determine with respect to his own consequent actions. But this voluntary determination of the soul of man, is the effect determined. This determining act of the soul is not denied, but supposed, as it is the effect we are speaking of, that the influence of God's Spirit determines. The scripture speaks of this as the reason that good men have virtue, that *God hath given it to them;* and the rea-

son why bad men have it not, that *God hath not given it to them.* These two together clearly prove that God is the determining or disposing cause of virtue or goodness in men.

§ 55. In many particulars their scheme contradicts common sense. It is contrary to common sense, that a being should continually meet with millions of millions of real proper disappointments and crosses to his proper desires, and not continually lead a distressed and unhappy life. It is contrary to common sense, that God should know that an event will certainly come to pass, whose non-existence he at the same time knows is not impossible. It is contrary to common sense that a thing should be the cause of itself; and that a thing not necessary in its own nature should come to pass without any cause: That the more indifferent a man is in any moral action, the more virtuous he is, &c.

§ 56. They say, their scheme gives *almost all* the glory to God. That matter, I suppose, may easily be determined, and it may be made to appear beyond all contest, how much they do ascribe to the man, and how much they do not. By them, salvation is so far from God, he gives opportunity to obtain salvation; it is God that gives the offer and makes the promise: but the obtaining the thing promised is of men. The being of the promise is of God; but their interest in it is wholly of themselves, of their own freewill. And furthermore, it is to be observed, that even God's making the offer, and giving the opportunity to obtain salvation, at least that which consists in salvation from eternal misery, is not of God, so as to be owing to any proper grace or goodness of his. For they suppose he was *obliged* to make the offer, and it would have been a reproach to his justice, if he had not given an opportunity to obtain salvation. For they hold it is unjust for God to make men miserable for Adam's sin; and that it is unjust to punish them for a sin that they cannot avoid; and that, therefore, it is unjust for God not to preserve or save all men that do what they can, or use their sincere endeavours to do their duty; and therefore, it certainly follows, that it is unjust in God not to give all opportunity to be saved or preserved from misery: and consequently it is no fruit at all of any grace or kindness in him to give such opportunity, or to make the offer of it. So that the fruit of God's kindness in man's salvation, is the positive happiness that belongs to salvation. For it is evident that a man's *making himself to differ* with regard to any great spiritual benefit, and his not receiving it from another but from himself, is ground of a man's boasting and glorying in himself, with respect to that benefit. "Who maketh thee to differ? why boastest thou, as though thou hadst not received it?"

§ 57. It is evident, that it is God's design to exclude man's boasting in the affair of his salvation. Now let us consider

what does give *ground* for boasting in the apostle's account, and what it is that in his account *excludes* boasting, or cuts off occasion for it. It is evident by what the apostle says, 1 Cor. i. latter end, that the entireness and universality of our dependence on God, is that which cuts off occasion of boasting; as, our receiving our wisdom, our holiness, and redemption through Christ, and not through ourselves; that Christ is made to us wisdom, justification, holiness and redemption; and not only so, but that it is of God that we have any part in Christ; *of him are ye in Christ Jesus:* nay, further, that it is from God we receive those benefits of wisdom, holiness, &c. through the Saviour. The import of all these things, if we may trust to Scripture representations, is, that God has contrived to exclude our glorying; that we should be wholly and every way dependent on God, for the moral and natural good that belongs to salvation; and that we have all from the hand of God, by his power and grace. And certainly this is wholly inconsistent with the idea that our holiness is wholly from ourselves; and, that we are interested in the benefits of Christ rather than others, is wholly of our own decision. And that such an universal dependence is what takes away occasion of taking glory to ourselves, and is a proper ground of an ascription of all the glory of the things belonging to man's salvation to God, is manifest from Rom. xi. 35, 36. "Or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and to him, and through him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

§ 58. Again, in the apostle's account, a benefit being of *our works*, gives occasion for boasting, and therefore God has contrived that our salvation shall not be of our works, but of mere grace; Rom. iii. 27. Eph. ii. 9. And that neither the salvation, nor the condition of it, shall be of our works, but that, with regard to all, we are *God's workmanship*, his *creation*, antecedently to our works; and his grace and power in producing this workmanship, and his determination or purpose with regard to them, are all prior to our works, and the cause of them. See also Rom. xi. 4—6. And it is evident that man's having virtue from himself, and not receiving it from another, and making himself to differ with regard to great spiritual benefits, does give ground for boasting, by the words of the apostle in Rom. iii. 27. And this is allowed by all as to spiritual gifts. And if so in them, more so in greater things; more so in that which in itself is a thousand times more excellent, and of ten thousand times greater importance and benefit.

By the Arminian scheme, that which is the most excellent thing, *viz.* virtue and holiness, which the apostle sets forth as being infinitely the most honourable, and will bring the sub-

jects of it to the greatest and highest honour, that which is the highest dignity of man's nature of all things that belong to man's salvation; in comparison of which, all things belonging to that salvation are nothing; that which does more than any thing else constitute the difference between them and others, as more excellent, more worthy, more honourable and happy; this is from themselves! With regard to this, they have not received it of another. With regard to this great thing, they, and they only, make themselves to differ from others; and this difference proceeds not at all from the power or grace of God.

§ 59. Virtue is not only the most honourable attainment, but it is that which men, on the supposition of their being possessed of it, are more apt to glory in, than in any thing else whatsoever. For what are men so apt to glory in as their own supposed excellency, as in their supposed virtue? And what sort of glorying is that, which, it is evident in fact, the Scriptures do chiefly guard against? It is glorying in their own righteousness, their own holiness, their own good works. It is manifest, that in the apostle's account, it is a proper consideration to prevent our boasting, that our distinction from others is not of ourselves, not only in being distinguished by better gifts and better principles, but in our being made partakers of the great privileges of Christians, such as being ingrafted into Christ, and partaking of the fatness of that olive tree. Rom. xi. 17, 18. "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches."

Here it is manifest, that the distinction between some and others, is the thing insisted on; and the apostle, verse 22, calls upon them to consider this great distinction, and to ascribe it only to the distinguishing goodness of God. "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness." And its being owing not to them, but to God and his distinguishing goodness, is the thing the apostle urges as a reason why they should not boast, but magnify God's grace or distinguishing goodness. And if it be a good reason, and the scheme of our salvation be every way so contrived (as the apostle elsewhere signifies) that all occasion of boasting should be precluded, and all reasons given to ascribe all to God's grace; then it is doubtless so ordered, that the greatest privileges, excellency, honour and happiness of Christians, should be that wherein they do not distinguish themselves, but the difference is owing to God's distinguishing goodness.—Yet, Stebbing strongly asserts, God is not the author of that difference that is between some and others, that some are good, and others bad! The Arminians

differ among themselves. Dr. Whitby supposes that what God does, is only proposing moral motives; but that in attending, adverting, and considering, we exercise our liberty. But Stebbing supposes, that the attention and consideration is itself owing to the Spirit of God; (page 217.) and then changes the question (pages 223, 224.) he was considering, who has the chief glory of our conversion, or of our virtue? and endeavours to prove the affirmative of *another* question, *viz.* whether God is the author of that pardon and salvation, of which conversion and virtue are the condition? He supposes, that one thing wherein the assistance of the Spirit consists, is the giving of a meek, teachable, disinterested *temper* of mind, to prepare men for faith in Christ; (pages 217, 259.) and that herein consists the drawing of the Father, John vi. 44. *viz.* in giving such a temper of mind—this he calls the preventing grace of God, that goes before conversion. He often speaks of a part that we do, and a part that God does. And he speaks of this as that part which God does. Therefore this, in distinction from the part which we do, (for so he speaks of it,) is wholly done by God. And consequently, here is virtue wholly from God, and not at all from the exercise of our own freewill: which is inconsistent with his own, and all other Arminian principles.

§ 69. The Arminian scheme naturally, and by necessary consequence, leads men to take all the glory of all spiritual good (which is immensely the chief, most important and excellent thing in the whole creation) to ourselves; as much as if we, with regard to those effects, were the supreme, the self-existent and independent, and absolutely sovereign disposers. We leave the glory of only the meaner part of creation to God, and take to ourselves all the glory of that which is properly the life, beauty, and glory of the creation, and without which it is all worse than nothing. So that there is nothing left for the great First and Last; no glory for either the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost in the affair. This is not carrying things too far, but is a consequence truly and certainly to be ascribed to their scheme of things. He may be said to be the *giver* of money that *offers* it to us, without being the proper determiner of our acceptance. But it is in the *acceptance* of offers, and the proper improvement of opportunities, wherein consists virtue. He may be said to be the giver of money or goods, that does not determine the wise choice; but if the wise and good choice itself be said to be the thing given, it supposes that the giver determines the existence of such a wise choice. But now, this is the thing of which God is represented as the giver, when he is spoken of as the giver of virtue, holiness, &c.; for virtue and holiness (as all our opponents in these controversies allow and maintain) is the thing wherein a wise and good choice consists.

§ 61. It is the common way of the Arminians, in their discourses and doctrines, which they pretend are so much more consistent with reason and common sense, than the doctrines of the Calvinists, to give no account at all, and make no proper answer to the inquiries made; and they do as Mr. Locke says of the Indian philosopher, who, when asked what the world stood upon, answered, it stood upon an elephant; and, when asked, what the elephant stood upon, he replied, on a broad-backed turtle, &c. None of their accounts will bear to be traced; the first link of the chain, and the fountain of the whole stream, must not be inquired after. If it be, it brings all to a gross absurdity, and self-contradiction. And yet, when they have done, they look upon others as stupid bigots, and void of common sense, or at least going directly counter to common sense, and worthy of contempt and indignation, because they will not agree with them. I suppose it will not be denied, by any party of Christians, that the happiness of the saints in the other world, consists much in perfect holiness and the exalted exercises of it; that the souls of the saints shall enter upon it at once at death; or, (if any deny that,) at least at the resurrection; that the saint is made perfectly holy as soon as ever he enters into heaven. I suppose none will say, that perfection is obtained by repeated acts of holiness; but, all will grant, that it is wrought in the saint immediately by the power of God; and yet that it is virtue notwithstanding. And why are not the beginnings of holiness wrought in the same manner? Why should not the beginnings of an holy nature be wrought immediately by God in a soul that is wholly of a contrary nature, as well as holiness be perfected in a soul that has already a prevailing holiness? And if it be so, why is not the beginning, thus wrought, as much virtue as the perfection thus wrought?

§ 62. Saving grace differs not only in *degree*, but in *nature* and kind, from common grace, or any thing that is ever found in natural men. This seems evident, because conversion is a work that is done at once, and not gradually. If saving grace differed only in degree from what went before, then the making a man a good man, would be a gradual work; it would be the increasing of the grace that he has, till it comes to such a degree as to be saving, at least it would be frequently so. But, that the conversion of the heart is not a work thus gradually wrought, but at once, appears by Christ's converting the soul being represented as his *calling* of it; Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the *called* according to his purpose. For, whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he

did predestinate, them he also *called;* and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Heb. ix. 15. "That they which are *called*, might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God, your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that *calleth* you, who also will do it." Nothing else can be meant in these places, *by calling*, but what Christ does in a sinner's saving conversion; by which it seems evident, that this is done at once, and not gradually. Hereby Christ shows his great power. He does but speak the powerful word, and it is done. He does but call, and the heart of the sinner immediately cometh, as was represented by his calling his disciples, and their immediately following him. So, when he called Peter and Andrew, James and John, they were minding other things, and had no thought of following Christ. There is something immediately put into their hearts, at that call, which makes them so immediately act in a manner altogether new, and so alien from what they were before.

§ 63. That the work of conversion is wrought at once, is further evident, by its being compared to a work of *creation*. When God created the world, he did what he did immediately; he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. He said, Let there be light, and there was light. Also, by its being compared to a raising from the dead. Raising from the dead, is not a gradual work, but it is done at once. God calls, and the dead come forth immediately. When God creates, he does not merely establish and perfect the things that were made before, but makes them wholly and immediately. The things that are seen, are not made of things that do appear. Saving grace in the heart, is said to be the new man, a new creature; and corruption the old man. If virtue in the heart of a holy man, be not different in its nature and kind, then the man might possibly have had the same seventy years before, and from the beginning of his life, and has it no otherwise now, but only in a greater degree: and how then is he a new creature?

§ 64. Again, it is evident, also, from its being compared to a *resurrection*. Natural men are said to be dead: But, when they are converted, they are by God's mighty and effectual power raised from the dead. Now there is no medium between being dead and alive. He that is dead, has no degree of life. He that has the least degree of life in him, is alive. When a man is raised from the dead, life is not only in a greater degree, but it is all new. And this is further evident by that representation that is made of Christ's converting sinners, in John v. 25. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming,

and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." This shows conversion to be an immediate and instantaneous work, like to the change made in Lazarus, when Christ called him from the grave; there went life with the call, and Lazarus was immediately alive. That before the call, tney are dead, and, therefore, wholly destitute of any life, is evident by that expression, "the dead shall hear the voice;" and, immediately after the call, they are alive; yêa, there goes life with the voice, as is evident, not only because it is said they shall live, but, also, because it is said, they shall hear his voice. It is evident, that the first moment they have any life, is the moment when Christ calls; and, when Christ calls, or as soon as they are called, they are converted; as is evident from what is said in the first argument, wherein it is shown, that to be called, and converted, is the same thing.

§ 65. A wicked man has not that principle of nature which a godly man has, as is evident by 1 John iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his *seed* remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The natural import of the metaphor shows, that by seed, is meant a principle of action: it may be small as a grain of mustard seed. A seed is a small thing: it may be buried up and lie hid, as the seed sown in the earth: it may seem to be dead, as seeds for a while do, till quickened by the sun and rain. But any degree of such a principle, or principle of such a nature, is what is called the seed: it need not be to such a degree, or have such a prevalency, in order to be called a seed. And it is further evident that this seed, or this inward principle of nature, is peculiar to the saints: for he that has it, cannot sin; and therefore he that sins, or is a wicked man, has it not.

§ 66. Natural men, or those that are not savingly converted, have no degree of that principle from whence all gracious actings flow, *viz.* the Spirit of God or of Christ; as is evident, because it is asserted both ways in scripture, that those who have not the spirit of Christ are not his, Rom. viii. 9; and also, that those who have the Spirit of Christ, are his; 1 John iii. 24. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." And the Spirit of God is called the earnest of the future inheritance, 2 Cor. i. 22. and v. 5; Eph. i. 14. Yea, that a natural man has nothing of the Spirit in him, no part nor portion in it, is still more evident, because *having of the Spirit* is given as a sure sign of being in Christ. 1 John iv. 13. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit." By which it is evident that they have none of that holy principle, that the godly have. And if they have nothing of the Spirit, they have nothing of those things that are the fruits of the Spirit, such as

those mentioned in Gal. v. 22. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These fruits are here mentioned, with the very design that we may know whether we have the Spirit or no. In the 18th verse, the apostle tells the Galatians, that if they are led by the Spirit, they are not under the law; and then directly proceeds, first to mention what are the fruits or works of the *flesh*, and then, what are the fruits of the *Spirit*, that we may judge whether we are led by the Spirit.

§ 67. That natural men, or those that are not born again, have nothing of that grace that is in godly men, is evident by John iii. 6; where Christ, speaking of regeneration, says, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." By flesh is here meant nature, and by spirit is meant grace, as is evident by Gal. v. 16, 17. Gal. vi. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 1. That is Christ's very argument: by this it is that Christ in those words would show Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration, that by the first birth we have nothing but nature, and can have nothing else without being born again; by which it is exceeding evident, that they who are not born again, have nothing else. And that natural men have not the Spirit is evident, since by this text with the context, it is most evident, that those who have the Spirit, have it by regeneration. It is born in them; it comes into them no otherwise than by birth, and that birth is in regeneration, as is most evident by the preceding and following verses. In godly men there are two opposite principles: the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; as Gal. v. 25. But it is not so with natural men. Rebekah in having Esau and Jacob struggle together in her womb, was a type only of the true *Church*.

§ 68. Natural men have nothing of that nature in them which true Christians have; and that appears, because the nature they have is divine nature. The saints alone have it. Not only they alone partake of such degrees of it, but they alone are *partakers* of it. To be a partaker of the divine nature is mentioned as peculiar to the saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. The words in this verse and the foregoing run thus: "According to his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Divine nature and lust are evidently here spoken of as two opposite principles in men. Those that are of the world, have only the latter principle. But to be partakers of the divine nature, is spoken of as peculiar to them that are distinguished and separated from the

world, by the free and sovereign grace of God giving them all things that pertain to life and godliness; by giving the knowledge of Christ, and calling them to glory and virtue: and giving them the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, and enabling them to escape the corruption of the world of wicked men. It is spoken of not only as peculiar to the saints, but as the highest privilege of saints.

§ 69. A natural man has no degree of that relish and sense of spiritual things, or things of the Spirit, and of their divine truth and excellency, which a godly man has; as is evident by I Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Here a natural man is represented as perfectly destitute of any sense, perception, or discerning of those things. For, by the words, he neither does nor can know, or discern them. So far from it, that they are foolishness unto him. He is such a stranger to them, that he knows not what the talk of such things means; they are words without a meaning to him; he knows nothing of the matter, any more than a blind man of colours. Hence it will follow, that the sense of religion which a natural man has, is not only not to the same *degree*, but is not of the same *nature* with what a godly man has. Besides, if a natural person has that fruit of the Spirit, which is of the same kind with what a spiritual person has, then he experiences within himself the things of the Spirit of God. How then can he be said to be such a stranger to them, and have no perception or discerning of them? The reason why natural men have no knowledge of spiritual things, is, that they have nothing of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. This is evident by the context. For there we are told it is by the Spirit these things are taught, verse 10—12. Godly persons, in the text we are upon, are called spiritual, evidently on this account, that they *have* the Spirit: and unregenerate men are called natural men, because they have nothing but nature. For natural men are in no degree spiritual; they have only nature, and no Spirit. If they had any thing of the Spirit, though not in so great a degree as the godly, yet they would be taught spiritual things, or the things of the Spirit in proportion; the Spirit, that searcheth all things, would teach them in some measure. There would not be so great a difference, that the one could perceive nothing of them, and that they should be foolishness to them, while, to the other, they appear divinely and unspeakably wise and excellent, as they are spoken of in the context, verses 6—9; and as such, the apostle speaks here of *discerning* them. The reason why natural men have no knowledge or perception of spiritual things, is, that they have none of that anointing spoken of, 1 John ii. 27. "But the

anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." This anointing is evidently here spoken of as a thing peculiar to true saints. Sinners never had any of that oil poured upon them: and because ungodly men have none of it, therefore they have no discerning of spiritual things. If they had any degree of it, they would discern in some measure. Therefore, none of that sense which natural men have of spiritual things, is of the same nature with what the godly have. And that natural men are wholly destitute of this knowledge, is further evident, because conversion is represented in scripture by opening the eyes of the blind. But this would be very improperly so represented, if a man might have some sight, though not so clear and full, for scores of years before his conversion.

§ 70. That unbelievers have no degree of that grace that the saints have, is evident, because they have no communion with Christ. If unbelievers partook of any of that spirit, those holy inclinations, affections and actings that the godly have from the Spirit of Christ, then they would have communion with Christ. The communion of saints with Christ, certainly consists in receiving of his fulness, and partaking of his grace, John i. 16. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." And the partaking of that spirit which God gives not by measure unto him, the partaking of Christ's holiness and grace, his nature, inclinations, tendencies, affections, love, desires, must be a part of communion with him. Yea, a believer's communion with God and Christ, does mainly consist in partaking of the Holy Spirit, as is evident by 2 Cor. xiii. 14. But that unbelievers have no communion or fellowship with Christ, appears,

1. Because they are not *united* to Christ; they are not in Christ. Those that are not in Christ, or are not united to him, can have no degree of communion with him: for union with Christ, is the foundation of all communion with him. The union of the members with the head, is the foundation of all their communion or partaking with the head; and so the union of the branch with the vine, is the foundation of all the communion it has with the vine, of partaking in any degree of its sap or life, or influence. So the union of the wife to the husband, is the foundation of her communion in his goods.—But no natural man is united to Christ; because all that are in Christ shall be saved; 1 Cor. xv. 22. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" *i. e.* all that are in Christ; for this speaks only of the glorious resurrection and eternal life. Phil. iii. 8, 9. "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord:

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found *in him*, not having on my own righteousness," &c. 2 Cor. v. 17. "Now, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." 1 John ii. 5. "Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. 24. "And he that keepeth his commandments, *dwelleth in him, and he in him;* and hereby we know *that he abideth in us*," &c. and iv. 13. "Hereby know we *that we dwell in him, and he in us.*"

2. The scripture more directly teaches, that only true saints have communion with Christ; 1 John i. 3—7. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." And 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." By this it appears, that those who have fellowship with Christ, are those that cannot fall away, whom God's faithfulness is bound to confirm to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of Jesus Christ.

§ 71. Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones is an illustrative confirmation, that however natural men may be the subjects of great and wonderful influences and operations of God's great power and Spirit; yet they do not properly partake at all of the Spirit before conversion. In all that is wrought in them, in every respect fitting and preparing them for grace, so that nothing shall be wanting but divine life; yet as long as they are without this, they have nothing of the Spirit. Which confirms the distinctions I have elsewhere made, of the Spirit of God influencing the minds of natural men under common illuminations and convictions, and yet not communicating himself in his own proper nature to them, before conversion; and that saving grace differs from common grace, not only in degree, but also in nature and kind. It is said, Rev. iii. 8. of the church at Philadelphia, which is commended above all other churches, *Thou hast a little strength;* certainly implying that ungodly men have none at all.

§ 72. That those that prove apostates, never had the same kind of faith with true saints, is confirmed by what Christ said of Judas, before his apostacy, John vi. 64. "But there are some of you who believe not. For Jesus knew from the begin-

ning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." By this it is evident, that Judas, who afterward proved an apostate, (and is doubtless set forth as an example for all apostates,) though he had a kind of faith in Christ, yet did not believe in Christ with a true faith, and was at that time, before his apostacy, destitute of that kind of faith which the true disciples had; and that he had all along, even from the beginning, been destitute of that faith. And by the 70th and 71st verses of the same chapter, it is evident, that he was not only destitute of that degree of goodness that the rest had, but totally destitute of Christian piety, and wholly under the dominion of wickedness; being in this respect like a devil, notwithstanding all his faith and temporary regard to Christ. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. For he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

§ 73. Why should we suppose that God would make any promises of spiritual and eternal blessings to that which has no goodness in it? Why should he promise that they shall obtain conversion, who do not do any thing right, or use any proper means in order to obtain it? For the proper means of obtaining grace is seeking it truly, with a love and appetite to it, and desire of it, and sense of its excellency and worthiness, and a seeking of it of God through Christ: and to such as seek it thus, God has faithfully promised he will bestow it.—But though there be no promise to any seekers of grace, but gracious ones; yet there must be a greater probability of their conversion who seek, though not after a gracious manner, and though they are not thoroughly and sufficiently resolved and sincere in their seeking, than of those who wholly neglect their salvation: there is not so great an unlikelihood of it. And therefore, if persons are out of the way of these means, there is no likelihood of their receiving grace. Because God bestows his grace by means; and so the more they are in the way of means, and the more they attend them, the more are they in the way of being met with by God, and receiving his grace by those means.

§ 74. Indefinite promises, as they are called, seem to be no other than promises of the public covenant, or the promises made to a professing covenant people. God has promised to his visible church a blessing on his ordinances: and with respect to the public society, the visible church to whom the promises are made, they are absolutely promised. But, not being limited to particular persons, to them they are no more than encouragements. Such promises as these, children are interested in by baptism. God has promised to bestow salvation on his church, and in the way of his appointed worship. "In all

places where I record my name, there will I come unto thee, and will bless thee." When God set his tabernacle amongst his people, he annexed a promise of his blessing.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

§ 1. THERE is just the same reason for those commands of earnest care and laborious endeavours for perseverance, and threatenings of defection, notwithstanding its being certain that all that have true grace shall persevere, as there is for earnest endeavours after godliness, and to make our calling and election sure, notwithstanding all that are elected, shall undoubtedly be saved. For as the case with respect to this is the same, decree or no decree, every one that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned. They that will not live godly lives, find out for themselves that they are not elected; they that will live godly lives, have found out for themselves that they are elected. So it is here: he that to his utmost endeavours to persevere in ways of obedience, finds out that his obedience and righteousness are true; and he that does not, discovers that his is false.

§ 2. As persons are commanded and counselled to repent and be converted, though it is already determined whether they shall be converted or no; after the same manner, and with the same propriety, persons are commanded and counselled to persevere, although by their being already converted, it is certain they shall persevere. By their resolutely and steadfastly persevering through all difficulties, opposition, and trials, they obtain an evidence of the truth and soundness of their conversion; and by their unstableness and backsliding, they procure an evidence of their unsoundness and hypocrisy. And it always happens, that persons who have the most need of being cautioned and counselled against falling, and apostacy, by reason of the weakness of their grace, have most need of an evidence of the truth of their grace. And those who have the least need of any evidence, by reason of the strength and lively exercise of grace, have least need of being warned against falling, they being least in danger of it. And so the same persons, when they are most in danger of falling,—by reason of the languishing of their graces, their ill-temper and workings of corruption—have *most* need of evidence; and, when in least need of care and watchfulness not to fall, by reason of the strength and vigorous actings of grace, they have *least* need of evidence.

So that there is as much need of persons exercising care and diligence to persevere in order to their salvation, as there is of their attention and care to repent and be converted. For our own care and diligence is as much the proper and decreed means of perseverance, as of any thing else; and the want of perseverance, is as much an evidence of the want of true conversion, as the want of conversion is a sign of the want of election. Labour and diligence to persevere, is as rational a way to make sure of the truth of grace, as they are to make sure of the truth of election. God's wrath and future punishment are proposed to all sorts of *men*, as motives to an universal and constant obedience, not only to the wicked, but also to the godly. Indeed, those that have obtained full assurance of their safe estate, are not capable of this motive, and they have no need of it. But when persons are most capable of the fear of hell, through their want of assurance—and their uncertainty, whether or no they are not exposed to damnation—by reason of the weakness of their grace, then they have most need of caution.

Coroll.—Here we may observe, that it is not the scripture way of judging of the truth of grace, to be determined principally by the *method and steps of the first work*, but by the exercise and fruits of grace in a holy life.

§ 3. *Perseverance* in faith, is, in one sense, the condition of justification; that is, the promise of acceptance is made only to a persevering sort of faith; and the proper evidence of its being of that sort, is actual perseverance. Not but that a man may have good evidences that his faith is of that sort, before he has finished his perseverance, yea, the first time that he exercises such a faith, if the exercises of it are lively and vigorous. But when the believer has those vigorous exercises of faith, by which he has clear evidences of its being of a persevering kind, he evermore feels most disposition and resolution to persevere, and most of a spirit of dependence upon God and Christ, to enable him so to do.

§ 4. As to the passages of scripture like that, Ezekiel xviii. 24, wherein are declared the fatal consequences of turning or falling away from righteousness, they do not at all argue but that there is an essential difference, in the very nature of the righteousness of those that persevere, and the righteousness of those that fall away. The one is of a lasting sort, the other not; and so, falling away, or holding out, are in those places respected as natural fruits, or discoveries, of the nature of the righteous, or of the wicked. If a man that had a prospect of being, ere long, in calamitous circumstances, of being poor, and the object of general contempt, and should make this declaration concerning his friend, or him that now appeared to be such, that if his friend would cleave to him through all his

circumstances, he would receive him and treat him ever after as his true friend, but, otherwise, he would utterly desert him as a false friend; this would not argue, that he thought there was no difference between the love of friendship that was persevering, and that which fails when it is tried; but only, that those difficulties discover the difference, and show whose love is of a lasting sort, and whose not. The promises in scripture are commonly made to the signs of grace; though God knows whether men be sincere or not, without the signs whereby men know it.

§ 5. God, when he had laid out himself to glorify his mercy and grace in the redemption of poor fallen men, did not see meet, that those who are redeemed by Christ, should be redeemed so imperfectly, as still to have the work of perseverance left in their own hands. They had been found already insufficient for this, even in their perfect state, and are now ten times more liable than formerly to fall away, and not to persevere, if, in their fallen, broken state, with their imperfect sanctification, the care of the matter be trusted with them. Man, though redeemed by Christ, so as to have the holy Spirit of God, and spiritual life again restored in a degree; yet is left a very poor, piteous creature, because all is suspended on his perseverance as it was at first; and, the care of that affair, is left with him as it was then; and, he is ten times more likely to fall away than he was then, if we consider only what he was *in himself*, to preserve him from it. The poor creature sees his own insufficiency to stand, from what has happened in time past; his own instability has been his undoing already; and now he is vastly more unstable than before. The great thing wherein the first covenant was deficient, was, that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the covenant, and man's perseverance, was entrusted with man himself, with nothing better to secure it, than his own strength. And, therefore, God introduces a better, which should be an everlasting covenant, a new and living way; wherein that which was wanting in the first, should be supplied, and a remedy should be provided against that, which, under the first covenant, proved man's undoing, *viz.* man's own weakness and instability; by a mediator being given, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; who cannot fail; who should undertake for his people, and take care of them. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him; and ever lives to make intercession for them. God did not see it fit that man should be trusted to stand in his own strength a second time. It is not fit, that in a covenant of grace, wherein all is of mere, free, and absolute grace, that the reward of life should be suspended on the perseverance of man, as dependent on the strength and steadfastness of his own will. It is a cove-

nant of works, and not a covenant of grace, that suspends eternal life on what is the fruit of a man's own strength. Eternal life was to have been of works in those two respects, *viz.* as it was to have been for man's own righteousness, and as it was suspended on the fruit of his own strength. For, though our first parent depended on the grace of God, the influences of his Spirit in his heart; yet that grace was given him already, and dwelt in him constantly, and without interruption, in such a degree as to hold him above any lust or sinful habit or principle. Eternal life was not merely suspended on that grace that was given him, and dwelt in him, but on his improvement of that grace which he already had. For, in order to his perseverance, there was nothing further promised beyond his own strength; no extraordinary occasional assistance was promised. It was not *promised* but that man should be left to himself as he was. But the new covenant is of grace, in a manner distinguishing from the old, in both these respects, that the reward of life is suspended neither on his own strength nor worthiness. It provides something above either. But if eternal life, under the new covenant, was suspended on man's own perseverance, or his perseveringly using diligent endeavours to stand without the promise of any thing further to ascertain it than his own strength, it would herein be further from being worthy to be called a covenant of grace than the first covenant; because man's strength is exceedingly less than it was then, and he is under far less advantages to persevere. And, if he should obtain eternal life, by perseverance in his own strength now, eternal life would, with respect to that, be much more of himself than it would have been by the first covenant; because, perseverance now, would be a much greater thing than under those circumstances; and he has but an exceeding small part of that grace, dwelling in him, to assist him, that he had then; and that which he has, does not dwell in him in the exercise of it by such a constant law as grace did then, but is put into exercise by the spirit of grace, in a far more arbitrary and sovereign way.

§ 6. Again, Christ came into the world to do that in which mere men failed. He came as a better surety, and that in him those defects might be supplied, which proved to be in our first surety, and that we might have a remedy for the mischief that came by those defects. But the defect of our first surety was, that he did not persevere. He wanted steadfastness; and, therefore, God sent us, in the next surety, one that could not fail; but should surely persevere. But this is no supply of that defect to us, if the reward of life be still suspended on perseverance, which has nothing, as to ourselves, greater to secure it still, than the strength of mere man; and the perseverance of our second surety, is no remedy against the like mischief.

which came by failure of our first surety; but, on the contrary, we are much more exposed to the mischief than before. The perseverance on which life was suspended, depended then indeed on the strength of *mere* man: but now (on the supposition) it would be suspended on the strength of *fallen* man.

In that our first surety did not persevere, we fell in and with him; for, doubtless, if he had stood, we should have stood with him. And, therefore, when God in mercy has given us a better surety to supply the defects of the first, a surety that might stand and persevere, and one that has actually persevered through the greatest imaginable trials; doubtless we shall stand and persevere in him. After all this, eternal life will not be suspended on our perseverance by our own poor, feeble, broken strength. Our first surety, if he had stood, would have been brought to eat of the tree of life, as a seal of a confirmed state of life in persevering and everlasting holiness and happiness; and he would have eat of this tree of life as a seal of persevering confirmed life, not only for himself, but as our head. As when he eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he tasted as our head, and so brought death on himself, and all his posterity; so, if he had persevered, and had eat of the tree of life, he would have tasted of that as our head, and therein life and confirmed holiness, would have been sealed to him and all his posterity. But Christ, the second Adam, acts the same part for us that the first Adam was to have done, but failed. He has fulfilled the law, and has been admitted to the seals of confirmed and everlasting life. God, as a testimony and seal of his acceptance of what he had done, as the condition of life, raised him from the dead, and exalted him with his own right hand, received him up into glory, and gave all things into his hands. Thus the second Adam has persevered, not only for himself, but for us; and has been sealed to confirmed and persevering and eternal life, as our head; so that all those that are his, and who are his spiritual posterity, are sealed in him to persevering life. Here it will be in vain to object, that persons, persevering in faith and holiness, is the condition of their being admitted to the state of Christ's posterity, or to a right in him; and that none are admitted as such, till they have first persevered. For this is as much as to say, that Christ has no church in this world; and that there are none on this side the grave admitted as his children or people; because they have not yet actually persevered to the end of life, which is the condition of their being admitted as his children and people; which is contrary to the whole scripture.

Christ having finished the work of Adam for us, does more than merely to bring us back to the probationary state of Adam, while he had yet his work to finish, knowing his eternal life

uncertain, because suspended on his uncertain perseverance. That alone is inconsistent with Christ's being a second Adam. For if Christ, succeeding in Adam's room, has done and gone through the work that Adam was to have done, and did this as our representative or surety, he has not thereby set us only in Adam's probationary, uncertain state, but has carried us, who are in him, and are represented by him, through Adam's working probationary state, unto that confirmed state that Adam should have arrived at, if he had gone through his own work.

§ 7. That the saints shall surely persevere, will necessarily follow from this, that they have already performed the obedience which is the righteousness by which they have *justification* unto life; or it is already performed for them, and imputed to them: for that supposes, that it is the same thing in the sight of God as if they had performed it. Now, when the creature has once actually performed and finished the righteousness of the law, he is immediately sealed and confirmed to eternal life. There is nothing to keep him off from the tree of life. But as soon as ever a believer has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, he has virtually finished the righteousness of the law.

It is evident the saints shall persevere, because they are already justified. Adam would not have been justified till he had fulfilled and done his work; and then his justification would have been a confirmation. It would have been an approving of him as having done his work, and as standing entitled to his reward. A servant that is sent out about a work, is not justified by his master till he has done: and then the master views the work, and seeing it to be done according to his order, he then approves and justifies him as having done his work, and being now entitled to the promised reward; and his title to his reward is no longer suspended on any thing remaining. So, Christ having done our work for us, we are justified as soon as ever we believe in him, as being, through what he has accomplished and finished, now already actually entitled to the reward of life. And justification carries in it not only remission of sins, but also being adjudged to life, or accepted as entitled by righteousness to the reward of life; as is evident, because believers are justified by communion with Christ in his justification. But the justification of Christ did most certainly imply both these things, *viz.* his being now judged free of that guilt which he had taken upon him, and also his having now fulfilled all righteousness—his having perfectly obeyed the Father, and done enough to entitle him to the reward of life as our head and surety—and therefore he then had eternal life given him as our head. That life which was begun when he was raised from the dead, was eternal life.

Christ was then justified in the same sense that Adam would have been justified, if he had finished his course of perfect obedience; and therefore implies in it confirmation in a title to life, as that would have done; and thus, all those that are risen with Christ, and have him for their surety, and so are justified in his justification, are certainly in like manner confirmed. And again, that a believer's justification implies not only a deliverance from the wrath of God, but a title to glory, is evident by Rom. v. 12, where the apostle mentions both these as joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, *and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" So, *remission* of sins and *inheritance* among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together, as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ: Acts xxvi. 18. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me." Both these are undoubtedly implied in that passing from death unto life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation: John v. 24. "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

To suppose that a right to life is suspended on our own perseverance, which is uncertain, and has nothing more sure and steadfast to secure it than our own good-wills and resolutions, (which way soever we suppose it to be dependent on the strength of our resolutions and wills, either with assistance, or in the improvement of assistance, or in seeking assistance,) is exceedingly dissonant to the nature and design of the gospel scheme. For, if it were so, it would unavoidably deprive the believer of the comfort, hope, and joy of salvation; which would be very contrary to God's design in the scheme of man's salvation, which is to make the ground of our peace and joy in all respects strong and sure; or else, he must depend much on himself, and the ground of his joy and hope must in a great measure be his own strength, and the steadfastness of his own heart, the unchangeableness of his own resolutions, &c; which would be very different from the gospel scheme.

§ 8. It is one act of faith to commit the soul to Christ's keeping in this sense, *viz.* to keep it from falling. The believing soul is convinced of its own weakness and helplessness, its inability to resist its enemies, its insufficiency to keep itself, and so commits itself to Christ, that he would be its keeper. The apostle speaks of his committing his soul by faith to Christ, under great sufferings and trials of his perseverance; 2 Tim. i. 12. "For which cause also I suffer these things. Neverthe-

less, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." And we are commanded to commit our way and our works unto the Lord; Psalm xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3. Faith depends on Christ for all the good we need, and especially good of this kind, which is of such absolute necessity in order to the salvation of our souls. The sum of the good that faith looks for, is the Holy Spirit. It looks for spiritual and eternal life; for perfect holiness in heaven, and persevering holiness here. For the just shall live by faith. It seems to be because continuance in faith is necessary to continuance in justification, at least in part, that the apostle expresses himself as he does, Rom. i. 17. "For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith." For it is by faith that we first perceive and know this righteousness, and do at first receive and embrace it; and being once interested in it, we have the continuance of faith in the future persevering exercises of it made sure to us. And thus that is fulfilled, "The just shall live by faith." Agreeable to 1 Pet. i. 5. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And also Heb. x. 35—39. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now, the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

§ 9. Perseverance is acknowledged by Calvinian divines, to be necessary to salvation. Yet it seems to me, that the manner in which it is necessary has not been sufficiently set forth. It is owned to be necessary as a *sine qua non;* and also, that though it is not that by which we first come to have a title to eternal life, yet it is necessary in order to the actual possession of it, as the way to it; that it is as impossible we should come to it without perseverance, as it is impossible for a man to go to a city or town, without travelling throughout the road that leads to it. But we are really saved by perseverance; so that salvation has a dependence on perseverance, as that which influences in the affair, so as to render it congruous that we should be saved. Faith (on our part) is the great condition of salvation; it is that *by* which we are justified and saved. But in this faith, the perseverance that belongs to it is a fundamental ground of the congruity that faith gives to salvation. Perseverance indeed comes into consideration, even in the justification of a sinner, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. For, God has respect to perseverance.

as being virtually in the first act. And it is looked upon as if it were a property of that faith by which the sinner is then justified. God has respect to continuance in faith; and the sinner is justified by that, as though it already were; because by divine establishment it shall follow; and so it is accepted, as if it were a property contained in the faith that is then seen. Without this, it would not be congruous that a sinner should be justified at his first believing; but it would be needful that the act of justification should be suspended till the sinner had persevered in faith. There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union between Christ and the soul should remain in order to salvation, as that it should be begun; for it is begun, to the end that it might remain. And if it could be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. The soul is saved no otherwise than by union with Christ, and so is fitly looked upon as his. It is saved *in him;* and in order to that, it is necessary that the soul *now* be in him, even when salvation is actually bestowed, and not merely that it should *once* have been in him; and therefore God, in justifying a sinner, even in the first act of faith, has respect to the congruity between justification and perseverance of faith. So that perseverance is necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, or as the way to possession; but it is necessary even to the congruity of justification.

§ 10. That perseverance is thus necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest from scripture; as particularly Heb. x. 38, 39. "Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul." Rom. xi. 20. "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off. But thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." John xv. 7. "If ye abide in me, and my works abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Heb. iii. 14. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Chap. v. 12. "Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." So that not only the first act of faith, but subsequent acts of faith, and perseverance in faith, do justify the sinner: although salvation is in itself sure and certain after the first act. For the way in which the first act of faith justifies, is not by making the futurition of salvation certain in itself; for that is as certain in itself by the divine decree, before the first act of faith, as afterward. Salvation is in some sense the sinner's right, before he believes. It was given him in Christ, before the world was. But before a sinner believes, he has not any thing from God that he can lay hold of, so as to either chal-

lenge it, or on good grounds hope for it. He cannot be said to have any right, because he has no congruity; and as to the promise made to Christ, he has no hold of that, because that is not revealed to him. If God had declared and promised to the angels that such a man should be saved; that would not give him any right of his own, or any ground of challenge. A promise is a manifestation of a person's design of doing some good to another, to the end that he may depend on it, and rest in it. The certainty in him arises from the manifestation; and the obligation in justice to him arises from the manifestation being made to him, to the effect that he might depend on it. And therefore subsequent acts of faith may be said to give a sinner a title to salvation, as well as the first. For, from what has been said, it appears that the congruity arises from them, as well as the first; they in like manner containing the nature of unition to Christ as mediator; and they may have as great, nay, a greater hand in the manifestation of the futurition of salvation to us for our dependence, than the first act. For our knowledge of this may proceed mainly from after-acts, and from a course of acts. The scripture speaks of after-acts of faith in both Abraham and Noah, as giving a title to the righteousness which is the matter of justification. See Rom. iv. 3; Heb. xi. 7.

§ 11. The doctrine of perseverance is manifest from the nature of the *mediation* of Christ. For as Christ is a mediator to reconcile God to man, and man to God, and as he is a middle person between both, and has the nature of both, so he undertakes for each, and, in some respect becomes surety for each with the other. He undertakes and becomes a surety for man to God. He engages for him, that the law, that was given him, shall be answered; and that justice, with respect to him, shall be satisfied, and the honour of God's majesty vindicated. So he undertakes and engages for the Father with man, in order to his being reconciled to God, and induced to come to him, to love him, and trust confidently in him, and rest quietly in him. He undertakes for the Father's acceptance and favour, John xiv. 21. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." He undertakes that the Father shall hear and answer their prayers. He becomes surety to see that their prayers are answered; John xiv. 13. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." He undertakes that they shall have all necessary supplies of grace from the Father; and he engages for the continuance of God's presence with them, and the continuance of his favour, and of the supplies of grace necessary to uphold and preserve them, and keep them from finally perishing; John xiv. 16. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide

with you for ever." And ver. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Christ does not only declare that God will give us needed grace, but he himself undertakes to see it done. He promises that he will bestow it from the Father; John xv. 26. "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father." It was necessary that some one should thus undertake for God with man, for the continuance of his pardoning and sanctifying grace, in order to the sinner's being fully reconciled to God, and brought fully and quietly to rest in him as his God; otherwise the sinner, conscious of his own weakness and sinfulness, could have no quiet rest in God, for fear of the union being broken between God and him, and for fear of incurring God's displeasure and wrath, and so having God an enemy for ever. He is in a capacity to undertake for us, and be surety for us, with the Father, because he puts himself in our stead. He also is in a capacity to undertake for the Father, and be surety for him with us, because the Father hath put him in his stead. He puts himself in our stead as priest, and answers for us, and does and suffers in that office what we should have done and suffered; and God puts him in his stead as king.—He is appointed to the government of the world, as God's vicegerent, and so, in that office, answers for God to us, and does and orders and bestows, that which we need from God. He undertakes for us in things that are expected of us as subjects, because he puts himself into our subjection. He appears in the form of a servant for us. So he undertakes for the Father, in that which is desired and hoped for of him as king: for the Father hath put him into his kingdom and dominion, and has committed all authority and power unto him. He is in a capacity to undertake for the Father with us, because he can say, as in John xvi. 15. "All things that the Father hath are mine."

§ 12. The first covenant failed of bringing man to the glory of God, through man's instability, whereby he failed of perseverance. Man's changeableness was the thing wherein it was weak. It was weak through the *flesh*.* But God had made a second covenant in mercy to fallen man, that in the way of this covenant he might be brought to the glory of God, which he failed of under the other. But it is God's manner, in things that he appoints and constitutes, when one thing fails of its proper end, he appoints another to succeed in the room of it; to introduce that the second time, in which the weaknesses

* Not properly through the *flesh*, but through that *passive power*, that cause of liability to fail, that want of essential perfection (the only ground of infallibility) which belonged to the whole man, prior to any moral defect. W.

and defects of the former are supplied, and which never shall fail, but shall surely reach its end, and so shall remain as that which needs no other to succeed it. So God removed the first dispensation by Moses, Heb. viii. 7—13. "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second," &c. So the priesthood of the order of Aaron ceases, because of the weakness and insufficiency of it to answer the ends of priesthood, which are, to reconcile God to man. Therefore, God introduces another priesthood, of the order of Melchizedec, that is sufficient, and cannot fail, and remains for ever. Heb. vii. So Moses, the first leader of Israel, failed of bringing them into Canaan; but Joshua, the second leader, did not fail. The kingdom of Saul, the first anointed of the Lord, did not continue; but the kingdom of the second anointed remains for ever. The first sanctuary, that was built in Israel, was a moveable tabernacle, and therefore ready to vanish away, or be removed finally:—and God forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh. But the second sanctuary was a firm building, an immoveable temple, which was typically an everlasting sanctuary, and that which God would never forsake; 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11. So the first covenant, that God made with Adam, failed, because it was weak through the weakness of human nature, to whose strength and stability the keeping was entrusted. Therefore, God introduces another better covenant, committed not to his strength, but to the strength of one that was mighty and stable, and, therefore, is a sure and everlasting covenant. God entrusted the affair of man's happiness on a weak foundation at first, to show man that the *foundation* was weak, and not to be trusted to, that he might trust in God alone. The first was only to make way for the second. God lighted up a divine light in man's soul at the first; but it remained on such a foundation, that Satan found means to extinguish it; and, therefore, when God lights it up a second time, it is, that it may never be extinguished.

§ 13. Some things may yet remain, that are properly the conditions of salvation; on which salvation may be suspended, that it may well excite to the utmost caution, lest we should come short of eternal life, and should perish for the want of them, after it is already become impossible that we should fail of salvation. For the condition on which the man, Christ Jesus, was to obtain eternal life, was his doing the work which God had given him to do; his performing perfect persevering obedience, and his therein conquering Satan and the world, and all opposition, and enduring all sufferings that he met with. Therefore, Christ used the utmost diligence to do this work, and used the utmost caution lest he should fail of it; and prayed with strong crying and tears, and wrestled with God in a bloody sweat, that he might not fail, but might have

God's help to go through. Yet it was impossible he should fail of eternal life, and the whole reward that had been promised him. The joy that was set before him, was not only certain to him, but he had a proper title to it as God's heir, by reason of his relation to God the Father, as being his only begotten Son. It was impossible that he should fail in the work to which he was appointed, as God had promised him sufficient and effectual grace and help to persevere, and already had made known his election: Psal. cx. 7. "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head." Isaiah xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Verse 4. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged." And verse 6: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness: I will hold thine hand, and keep thee." So it was in effect promised in the revelations that were made to Mary and Joseph, Zechariah, &c., and so to himself in answer to his prayers, by a voice from heaven. "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." It appears, that all was certain beforehand, by God's actually saving great numbers beforehand, on the ground of his future perseverance in his work.

§ 14. Grace is that which God implants in the heart against great opposition of enemies, great opposition from the corruption of the heart, and from Satan and the world. Great are the efforts of all these against the implantation of it, and they all labour to the utmost to keep it out. Seeing, therefore, that God manifests his all-conquering power in giving grace a place in the heart in spite of those enemies, he will, doubtless, maintain it there against their united efforts to root it out. He that has so gloriously conquered them in bringing in grace, will not at last suffer himself to be conquered, by their expelling that which he has so brought in by his mighty power.—He that gloriously subdued those enemies under his feet, by bringing this image of his into the soul, will not suffer this image of his finally to be trampled under their feet. God, alone, could introduce it. It was what he undertook; and it was wholly his work, and, doubtless, he will maintain it. He will not forsake the work of his own hands. Where he has begun a good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ. Grace shall endure all things, and shall remain under all things; as the expression παντα υπομενει literally signifies, in 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

§ 15. The Spirit of God was given at first, but was lost. God gives it a second time, never to be utterly lost. The Spirit is now given in another manner than it was then. Then indeed it was communicated, and dwelt in their hearts. But this communication was made without conveying at the same time any

proper right or sure title to it. But when God communicates it the second time, as he does to a true convert, he withal gives it to him to be his own; he finally makes it over to him in a sure covenant. He is their purchased and promised possession. Man, in his first estate, had no benefit at all properly made over to him: for God makes over benefits only by covenant: and then the condition of the covenant had not been fulfilled. But now, man, at his first conversion, is justified and adopted: he is received as a child and an heir, as a joint heir with Christ. His fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. God is theirs, and Christ is theirs; and the Holy Ghost is theirs; and all things are theirs. The Holy Spirit, who is the sum of all good, is their inheritance; and that little of it that they have in this life, is the earnest of their future inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession. Heaven is theirs: their conversation is there. They are citizens of that city, and of the household of God. Christians are represented as being come already to heaven, to Mount Zion, the city of the living God; to an innumerable company of angels, &c.—Heaven is the proper country of the church. They are raised up together by Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places: Eph. ii. 6. "They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." The whole tenor of the gospel shows, that Christians have actually a full and final right made over to them, to spiritual and heavenly blessings.

§ 16. That the saints should be earnestly exhorted and pressed to care and caution, and earnest endeavours to persevere, is most reasonable; and it cannot be otherwise, notwithstanding their having an absolute, unchangeable promise, that they shall persevere. For still perseverance is their duty, and what they are to do in obedience to God. For that is the notion of perseverance, their holding out in the way of God's commandments. But if it were absurd to command them to persevere, as the work they have to do, then how would they do it in obedience to him? The angels in heaven are confirmed, and it is promised unto them that they never shall sin: yet it is proper for God to give them commands, though in so doing he requires the improvement of their care and endeavours to obey and fulfil his will exactly. It is not obedience, if they do not take care and endeavour to obey. If they should cease to take care, that very thing would prove their fall. So, in this case, if Christians cease to take care to persevere, that very thing is falling away.

§ 17. It shows the infallible perseverance of true Christians, that their spiritual life is a participation with Christ in the life that he received as risen from the dead. For they live by Christ's living in them: Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with

Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That is, by the life that he has received since his resurrection, and by his communicating to them that fulness which he received when he rose from the dead. When he rose, he received the promise of the Father, the Spirit of life without measure, and he sheds it forth on believers. The oil poured on the risen head goes down to the skirts of the garments; and thus Christ lives in believers by his Spirit dwelling in them. Believers, in their conversion, are said to be risen with Christ; Col. ii. 12, 13 "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the circumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him." And chap. iii. 1. "If ye then be risen with Christ," &c. And Eph. ii. 5, 6. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together." Rom. v. 10. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his, life." This spiritual resurrection and life is procured and purchased for Christ's members, by Christ's suffering obedience, in the same manner as his own resurrection and life is purchased by it. And they receive life as united to him, as members of a risen Saviour, and as being married in their conversion to him.

§ 18. The perseverance of faith is necessary to a congruity to salvation. For it is implied in several places of scripture, that if true believers should fail in persevering in faith they would be in a lost state; John xviii. 8, 9. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none:" *i. e.* Christ took care that they might go away, that they might not be in the way of such temptations as would be in danger of overthrowing them, so that they should not persevere. And it is implied, that if they were overthrown, and should not persevere, Christ would have lost them; the saving relation that they stood in to Christ would have been dissolved. The same seems fully implied in Christ's prayer in the 17th chapter of John. Thus, he makes use not only of their having received God's word, and believed that God had sent him, but their having kept his word, as a good plea for their title to that favour and acceptance of the Father, which he asks of the Father for them; as ver. 6, 7, 8, &c.—The same is implied in the 11th verse: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." This implies that their being one, or their standing in a saving

relation to him, and in union with his mystical body, depends on the perseverance of their faith, even that union on which a title to all spiritual and saving benefits depends, which is more fully spoken of in the 21st and following verses. This perseverance of believers seems to be the benefit which is the principal subject of this whole prayer. And in Luke xxii. 31, 32. it is implied, that if Peter's faith had failed, Satan would have had him: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Where it seems implied, that if they were not kept through faith, or if their faith did not persevere, they never would come to salvation. So, believers being overthrown in their faith, or their not knowing Christ's voice and following him, is called a being plucked out of Christ's hand; and it is implied, that the consequence would be their perishing. It also seems to be implied, that their possession of eternal life by Christ's gift depends on their perseverance; John x. 27, 28. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of mine hand." And in the 15th chapter of John, believers persevering in faith in Christ, or their abiding in him, is spoken of as necessary to the continuance of the saving union and relation that is between Christ and believers, and Christ's abiding in them; as ver. 4, 5. "Abide in me, and I in you,—I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." And in the 6th verse, it is spoken of the necessary consequence of their not abiding in Christ, if that were possible; that the union should be utterly broken between Christ and them, and that damnation should be the consequence. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And in the 7th verse this perseverance of faith is spoken of as the necessary means of the success of faith as expressed in prayer, which is faith's voice, necessary to obtain those good things which faith and prayer seek. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And in the 9th and 10th verses, it is implied that Christ's acceptance of us, and favour to us as his, depends on our perseverance: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." So, the same perseverance is spoken of as necessary to our continuing in the favour and grace of God. "Now, when the congregation was broken

up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."—And so it is spoken of as necessary to continuing in the goodness of God ; and being cut off, is spoken of as a certain consequence of the contrary. Rom. xi. 22. "Behold therefore, the goodness and severity of God ; on them which fell, severity ; but towards thee goodness if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off." That expression, of standing fast *in the Lord*, 1 Thess. iii. 8. and Phil. iv. 1. implies that perseverance is necessary to a continuing in Christ, or in a saving relation to him ; and more plainly still in 1 John ii. 24. "Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." See 1 Cor. xv. 2. and 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. and Heb. xii. 28. See also Jer. iii. 19.

§ 19. Concerning the objection from Ezekiel xviii. 24. "If the righteous shall fall from his righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered ; but in the iniquity which he hath done shall he die," and the like ; God saying this does not at all prove, that it is supposed possible that a truly righteous man should fall from his righteousness ; any more than God's saying, Levit. xviii. 4, 5. "Ye shall do my judgments and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein : I am the Lord your God ; ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them." The scripture, in saying, he that doeth these things shall live in them, does not design to teach us, that in the present state of things, it is possible for us to do those things in a legal sense, (in which sense the words are certainly proposed, as the apostle teaches ;) but only teaches the certain connexion there is between doing these things and living in them, for wise ends ; particularly to lead us, by such a legal proposal, to see our utter inability to obtain life by our own doings. So the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The scripture, in saying, if the righteous shall fall away from his righteousness, he shall die ; does not teach us, that in the present state of things, since the fall, it is possible for a truly righteous man to fall from his righteousness ; but only teaches us the certain connexion between the antecedent and the consequent, for wise ends : and particularly, that those who think themselves righteous, may beware of falling from righteousness. For it is not unreasonable to suppose that God should put us on bewaring of those things that are already impossible, any more than that he should direct us to seek and pray for those things that are promised and certain.

§ 20. With respect to those texts in Ezekiel—that speak of a righteous man's falling away from his righteousness—the

doctrine of perseverance was not so fully revealed under that dispensation. It was of service to the godly to make them wary; but especially to those who were legally righteous, and trusted in their own righteousness, as Ezekiel's hearers did; to convince them of this, that there was a connexion between the antecedent, falling away, and the consequent, the dying in their iniquity. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And it is so spoken of once and again by this very prophet, chap. xi. 17—21. and chap. xxxvi. 24—29. Yea, in this very chapter, after he had been declaring the danger of falling away from righteousness, the children of Israel seem to be exhorted to this very thing as a remedy against falling away; ver. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" They needed not only to turn from their transgressions, but to cast them away utterly, to have finally done with them, and to make them a new heart, for the prophet declares, that their old heart was a backsliding heart, bent to backslide, as the prophet often complains.

§ 21. The godly themselves were really exposed to die in their iniquity, *i. e.* they were liable to be destroyed by God's awful judgments in this world. The prophet has a special eye to those destroying judgments that God had lately brought on the the nation of the Jews, which are very much the subject of the prophecy, and seem to have given occasion for it, and which the Jews had respect to in the proverb which they used, and which gave occasion to what is said in this chapter. If the sinner turned from his outward wickedness, unto an outward righteousness only, he would save his soul alive with regard to those outward calamities; and if the righteous fell away outwardly by committing some grievous sin, and getting into a bad way, they exposed themselves to die by this their iniquity in this manner.

§ 22. That there is a real difference between them that fall away, and them that persevere, even before they fall away, is evident by the things that are given as a reason of their falling away; because they have no root in themselves; because they have not counted the cost, and because they have no oil in their vessels. Those that have no root, differ from those who have root, before there be the *effect* of their having no root; And so those that have no oil, &c. And it appears again, by what is said, John ii. 23, &c. that "when Christ was at Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his

name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." And so, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 23. *Objection.* But it is in the same chapter said, "That if a wicked man turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live:" where doubtless must be understood by "doing that which is lawful and right," sincere and gracious righteousness, because there is a promise of life. And we must doubtless understand doing that which is lawful and right here in the same sense as before. *Answer.* We may understand it in the same sense, for an external, visible, material righteousness. When it is said, if he turn from his iniquity and do that which is lawful and right, it must be understood, if he continues so to do and do not turn from it again. According to the schemes of both Arminians and Calvinists, this must be understood. Whereby the objection is overthrown.

Visible Christians are, in Scripture, called saints, or holy; which is equivalent to the calling them righteous. The Jews are called an holy nation: the land is a land of uprightness; when only visibility is intended. By righteous, sometimes is meant only innocent, or materially righteous in some particular. "Wilt thou, also, destroy a righteous nation?" Gen. xx. 4. Exod. xxiii. 7. "The innocent and the righteous, slay thou not:" Deut. xxv. 1. Ye shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked:" 1 Sam. iv. 11. "How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person?" 2 Kings x. 9. By the righteous man that the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, he certainly does not speak in so limited a sense as to mean those that are of perfect and upright hearts, but so as to include those of an unsound heart, that trust in their own righteousness to commit iniquity; (see Ezek. xxxiii. 13;) *i. e.* those whose motive is only self-love, and their own safety, and so trust that they have righteousness enough to render them safe, though they do commit sin. Those that are only restrained from committing sin by fear, and are ready to embrace, and are glad of opportunities of committing sin with impunity; these cannot be such as the sincerely righteous are often described to be, *viz.* such as love God with all their hearts and souls; that love the way of his commandments; that choose the way of his commands, &c. The reason why some do not persevere, is, that there is not now a right heart in them; as is evident by Deut. v. 29. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments!" &c.

§ 24. When it is said, "If a righteous man turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, his righteousness shall not be remembered, but he shall die in his iniquity;" we need not, according to the Scripture manner of expression, understand any thing, but his seeming righteousness, or the righteousness that he *seemeth* to have. Christ has often such an aphorism as this, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath;" which he applies to that apparent godliness, grace, or piety, which natural men have, as is evident by the contexts, and the occasions of his using this aphorism; as Matt. xiii. 12. and Matt. xxv. 29. and Mark iv. 25. This, in another place, is explained thus:— "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he *seemeth* to have;" Luke viii. 18. Being a righteous man, does, indeed, commonly signify to be one that is truly and sincerely godly. And so is believing in Christ mentioned frequently as the distinguishing character of one that is truly Christ's disciple. Yet we read of some that are said to believe, who, even at that very time, are spoken of as wanting something necessary to make them true disciples: John ii. 23, 24, 25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself to them because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." These words intimate, that though they believed, yet Christ knew that they had not that in them then, that was to be depended on for perseverance; which implies, that if they were true believers, of a right principle, their perseverance might be depended on. And we are elsewhere told, why some that believe, endure but for a while, and do not persevere, *viz.* because they have *no root* in themselves.

§ 25. That there is an essential difference between the faith and seeming grace of such professors as fall away, and such as persevere, even before any distinction appears as to perseverance, or while both retain their religion, is exceedingly manifest by John vi. 64, 65. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." And verse 70: "And Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Here, before Judas had fallen away, he is said not to believe, and to be a devil. Now Judas was a professing disciple, and a distinguished one. He was a visible believer. Christ speaks of him as one that had

forsaken all, and followed him in the regeneration, as is evident in Matt. xix. 27, 28; and as one that had continued with Christ in his temptations, Luke xxii. 28.—compared with verse 30. There were great appearances of true grace in him, as there were in Ahitophel, his type, with whom David took sweet counsel, &c. And, therefore, as a righteous man, Christ had given him the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and sent him forth to preach the gospel, and heal the sick, and cast out devils.—Yet he, even before he fell away, is said not to believe, but to be then a devil: which is agreeable to what the apostle says of apostates,—"They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us."

§ 26. That they who once truly believe in Christ, never fall away finally and perish, is evident, because they that now believe not, and are in a state of condemnation, are spoken of as those that *never have* believed, John iii. 18. "Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Which supposes, that none of those that have believed, are now unbelievers, or are now in a state of condemnation. So again, those who shall be condemned at the day of judgment, are represented as those, not only whom Christ then will know not, but as those whom he never knew, Matt. vii. 23. But how can this be a true representation, if some of them were once true Christians, and so were known and owned by Christ, but only have since apostatized? When St. Paul kept under his body, lest he should be a cast-away, (1 Cor. ix. 27.) he did no otherwise than he was wont to do in temporal concerns, in cases wherein he was beforehand certain of the event. So he sent word to the chief captain of the Jews lying in wait to kill him, lest he should be murdered by them, though it was revealed to him from God, but the very night before, that he should live to see Rome; Acts xxiii. 12—21. So he would not allow the sailors to leave the ship." &c. *Bellamy's True Religion, Disc.* 1. *Inference* 9. 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." This could not be true, if a man who has truly seen him, and known him, might finally fall away to sin.

§ 27. As to scripture *cautions* against falling away, lest it should issue in damnation; we may observe that God had been pleased to connect eternal life with eating the fruit of the tree of life; and therefore, although it was utterly impossible that Adam should have eternal life in himself, after he had fallen, as God's peremptory declaration and unalterable constitution had made it impossible; yet we are told, that after the fall, God placed cherubims and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life, lest the man should put forth his hand, and take and eat of the fruit of the tree, and live for ever.

So God has connected damnation with living in allowed sin, and being overcome by sin, and brought under its power. And therefore, although it be impossible, that men, after they are once truly converted, should ever perish, yet they are warned against falling away and yielding to the power of sin, lest they should perish: and the apostle Paul kept under his body, lest he should be a cast-away.

§ 28. As to *objections* from such hypothetical propositions as those, Heb. x. 27, &c. "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth." Heb. vi. 4, &c. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they fall away," &c. Such hypothetical propositions may be true, when one or both parts of it are impossible, as the truth of such a proposition consists in the connexion of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, "If I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you." See *Gill* against *Whitby*, vol. i. p. 271.

§ 29. *Objection.* That we are required to TAKE CARE and to PRAY that we may persevere. It was impossible for Christ to fail under his *trials;* and yet how evident is it that he used means, endeavours, care, labour, and earnest prayers, that he might persevere?—In order to show, that an absolute promise of perseverance does consist with counsels and exhortations to *endeavour*, and *care* to persevere, I would lay down the following positions.

Position I. What it is proper for us to seek by earnest and importunate prayer, it is proper for us to use means, *labour and care, for that end.* The reason is plain: prayer is one kind of seeking the thing; it is using means, and one way of labouring for it, taking care to obtain it, and pursuing after it. There are many instances of prayer, and commands to pray for things promised. Christ on earth prayed for things promised; and he continually intercedes in heaven for things promised.

Position II. What it is proper that persons should use endeavours, means, and care for, they are properly *exhorted* to use those means and endeavours.

Position III. That which it is proper for another to use means, labours, and care for, that he may obtain it, though he knows it is certainly promised, it is proper that we should use means. &c. to obtain for ourselves, though it is promised. But Christ used means, endeavours, labour, &c. for the salvation of sincerely good men, though it be promised. He laboured, took care, denied himself, and suffered for the salvation of sincerely good men; which yet had been before abundantly promised to him, and promised to men in the Old Testament; and Christ himself had promised it. The scripture represents, that Christ ran a race to win a prize, and endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.

§ 30. If it were left to the freedom of men's own will, whether men should persevere, in the sense that the Arminians suppose; *i. e.* to a will not determined by God, but self-determined, then it would be absurd to pray to God that we may persevere; that he would keep us from falling, and that he would uphold our goings in his paths, &c.

§ 31. If grace implanted in the heart, be not an infallible sign that a man shall have eternal life, how is the Spirit of God an earnest of glory? when a man may have the Spirit, and yet have no assurance that he shall be glorified. For every one who has the grace of God implanted in his heart, has the Holy Spirit of God in his sanctifying influences.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING THE NECESSITY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

§ 1. The necessity of satisfaction for sin, and the reasonableness of that Christian doctrine, may appear from the following considerations: *Justice* requires that sin be punished, because sin deserves punishment. What the demerit of sin calls for, justice calls for; for it is only the same thing in different words. For the notion of a desert of punishment, is the very same as a just connexion with punishment. None will deny but that there is such a thing, in some cases, as the desert or demerit of a crime, its calling for, or requiring punishment. And, to say that the desert of a crime does require punishment, is just the same thing as to say, the reason why it requires it is, that it deserves it. So that the suitableness of the connexion between the crime and the punishment, consists in the desert; and, therefore, wherever desert is, there is such suitableness. None will deny, that some crimes are so horrid, and so deserving of punishment, that it is requisite they should not go unpunished, unless something very considerable be done to make up for the crime; either some answerable repentance, or some other compensation, that in some measure at least balances the desert of punishment, and so, as it were, takes it off, or disannuls it; otherwise, the desert of punishment remaining, all will allow, that it is fit and becoming, and to be desired, that the crime should be severely punished. And why is it so, but only from the demerit of the crime, or because the crime so much deserves such a punishment? It justly excites so great abhorrence and indignation, that it is requisite there should be

a punishment answerable to this abhorrence and indignation that is fitly excited by it. But by this, all is granted that needs to be granted, to show, that desert of punishment carries in it a requisiteness of the punishment deserved. For, if greater crimes do very much require punishment, because of their great demerit, lesser crimes will also require punishment, but only in a lesser degree, proportionably to their demerit; because the ground of the requisiteness of the punishment of great crimes, is their demerit. It is requisite that they should be punished, on no other account but because they deserve it.

§ 2. Besides, if it be allowed, that it is requisite that great crimes should be punished with punishment in some measure answerable to the heinousness of the crime, without something to balance them, some answerable repentance or other satisfaction, because of their great demerit, and the great abhorrence and indignation they justly excite, it will follow, that it is requisite that God should punish all sin with infinite punishment; because all sin, as it is against God, is infinitely heinous, and has infinite demerit, is justly infinitely hateful to him, and so stirs up infinite abhorrence and indignation in him. Therefore, by what was before granted, it is requisite that God should punish it, unless there be something in some measure to balance this desert. Now there can be no repentance of it, or sorrow for it, in any measure answerable or proportionable to the heinousness of the demerit of the crime; because that is infinite, and there can be no infinite sorrow for sin in finite creatures; yea, there can be none that bears any proportion to it. Repentance is as nothing in comparison of it, and, therefore, can weigh nothing when put in the scales with it, and so does nothing at all towards compensating it, or diminishing the desert or requisiteness of punishment, any more than if there were no repentance. If any ask, why God could not pardon the injury on repentance, without other satisfaction, without any wrong to justice; I ask the same person, why he could not also pardon the injury *without* repentance? For all the repentance men are capable of, is as no repentance at all, in comparison with the greatness of the injury; for it bears no proportion to it. And it would be as dishonourable and unfit for God to pardon the injury without any repentance at all, as to do it merely on the account of a repentance that bears no more proportion to the injury, than none at all. Therefore, we are not forgiven on repentance, because it in any wise compensates, or takes off, or diminishes the desert or requisiteness of punishment; but because of the respect that evangelical repentance has to compensation already made.

§ 3. If sin, therefore, deserves punishment, that is the same thing as to say, that it is fit and proper that it should be pu-

nished. If the case be so, that sin deserves punishment from men, in those cases it is proper it should receive punishment from men. A fault cannot be properly said to deserve punishment from any, but those to whom it belongs to inflict punishment when it is deserved. In those cases, therefore, wherein it belongs to men to inflict punishment, it is proper for them to inflict that punishment that is deserved of them. Again, if sin's desert of punishment be the proper ground of the fitness of its connexion with punishment, or rather be that wherein fitness of the connexion consists; it will thence follow, not only that it is fit that the sin which deserves punishment, should be punished, but, also, that it should be punished as it deserves. It is meet that a person's state should be agreeable to the quality of his dispositions and voluntary actions. Suffering is suitable and answerable to the quality of sinful dispositions and actions; it is suitable that they who do evil, should receive evil in proportion to the evil that they do or will. It is but justice that it should be so; and, when sin is punished, it receives but its own, or that which is suitably connected with it. But it is a contradiction to say, that it is suitably connected with punishment, or that it is suitable that it should be connected with it, and yet that it is suitable it should not be connected with it. All sin may be resolved into hatred of God and our neighbour; as all our duty may be resolved into love to God and our neighbour. And it is but meet, that this spirit of enmity should receive a return in its own kind, that it should receive enmity again. Sin is of such a nature, that it wishes ill, and aims at ill to God and man; but to God especially. It strikes at God; it would, if it could, procure his misery and non-existence. It is but suitable, that with what measure it metes, it should be measured to it again. It is but suitable, that men should reap what they sow, and that the rewards of every man's hand should be given him. This is what the consciences of all men naturally declare. There is nothing that men know sooner, after they come to the exercise of their reason, than that, when they have done wickedness, they deserve punishment. The consciences not only of Christians, and those who have been educated in the principles of divine revelation, but, also, the consciences of heathens inform them of this: therefore, unless conscience has been stupified by frequent violations, when men have done wickedness, there remains a sense of guilt upon their minds; a sense of an obligation to punishment. It is natural to expect that which conscience or reason tells them it is suitable should come; and, therefore, they are afraid and jealous, and ready to flee when no man pursues. Seeing, therefore, it is requisite that sin should be punished, as punishment is deserved

and just; therefore, the *justice* of God obliges him to punish sin. For it belongs to God, as the Supreme Ruler of the universality of things, to maintain order and decorum in his kingdom, and to see to it, that decency and righteousness take place in all cases. That perfection of his nature, whereby he is disposed to this, is his justice: therefore, his justice naturally disposes him to punish sin as it deserves.

§ 4. The *holiness* of God, which is the infinite opposition of his nature to sin, naturally and necessarily disposes him to punish sin. Indeed his justice is part of his holiness. But when we speak of God's justice inclining him to punish sin, we have respect only to that exercise of his holiness whereby he loves that holy and beautiful order that consists in the connexion of one thing with another, according to their nature, and so between sin and punishment; and his opposition to that which would be so unsuitable as a disconnexion of these things. But now I speak of the holiness of God as appearing not directly and immediately in his hatred of an unsuitable, hateful disconnexion between sin and that which is proper for it; but in his hatred of sin itself, or the opposition of his nature to the odious nature of sin. If God's nature be infinitely opposite to sin, then doubtless he has a disposition answerable to oppose it in his acts and works. If he by his nature be an enemy to sin with an infinite enmity, then he is doubtless disposed to act as an enemy to it, or to do the part of an enemy to it. And if he be disposed naturally to do the part of an enemy against sin, or, which is the same thing, against the faultiness or blameworthiness of moral agents; then it will follow, he is naturally disposed to act as an enemy to those that are the persons faulty and blameworthy, or are chargeable with the guilt of it, as being the persons faulty. Indignation is the proper exercise of hatred of any thing as a fault or thing blameable; and there could be no such thing either in the Creator or creature, as hatred of a fault without indignation, unless it be conceived or hoped that the fault is suffered for, and so the indignation be satisfied. Whoever finds a hatred to a fault, and at the same time imputes the fault to him that committed it, he therein feels an indignation against him for it. So that God, by his necessary infinite hatred of sin, is necessarily disposed to punish it with a punishment answerable to his hatred.

§ 5. It does not become the Sovereign of the world, a being of infinite glory, purity, and beauty, to suffer such a thing as sin, an uncomely disorder, an infinitely detestable pollution, to appear in the world subject to his government, without his making an opposition to it, or giving some public manifestations and tokens of his infinite abhorrence of it; for "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity;"

Heb. i. 13. It is natural in such a case to expect tokens of the utmost opposition. If we could behold the infinite Fountain of purity and holiness, and could see what an infinitely pure flame it is, and with what a pure brightness it shines, so that the heavens appear impure when compared with it; and then should behold some infinitely odious and detestable filthiness brought and set in its presence: would it not be natural to expect some ineffably vehement opposition made to it? and would not the want of it be indecent and shocking?

§ 6. If it be to God's glory that he is in his nature infinitely holy and opposite to sin; then it is to his glory to be infinitely displeased with sin. And if it be to God's glory to be infinitely displeased with sin; then it must be to his glory to exercise and manifest that displeasure, and to act accordingly. But the proper exercise and testimony of displeasure against sin in the Supreme Being and absolute Governor of the world, is taking vengeance. Men may show their hatred of sin by lamenting it, and mourning for it, and taking great pains, and undergoing great difficulties to prevent or remove it, or by approving God's vengeance for it. Taking vengeance is not the proper way of fellow-subjects' hatred of sin; but it is in the Supreme Lord and Judge of the world, to whom vengeance belongs; because he has the ordering and government of all things, and therefore the suffering of sin to go unpunished would in him be a conniving at it. Taking vengeance is as much the proper manifestation of God's displeasure at sin, as a mighty work is the proper manifestation of his power, or as a wise work is the proper manifestation of his wisdom. There may be other testimonies of God's displeasedness with and abhorrence of sin, without testifying his displeasure in condign punishment. He might declare he has such a displeasure and abhorrence. So there might be other testimonies of God's power and wisdom, besides a powerful wise effect. He might have declared himself to be infinitely wise and powerful. But yet there would have been wanting the proper manifestations of God's power and wisdom, if God had only declared himself to be possessed of these attributes.—The creatures might have believed him to be all-wise and almighty; but by seeing his mighty and wise works, they see his power and wisdom. So if there had been only a declaration of God's abhorrence and displeasure against sin, the creature might have believed it, but could not have seen it, unless he should also take vengeance for it.

§ 7. The honour of the *greatness*, excellency and majesty of God's being, requires that sin be punished with an infinite punishment. Hitherto I have spoken of the requisiteness of God's punishing sin, on account of the demerit and hatefulness of it absolutely considered, and not directly as God is in-

terested in the affair. But now, if we consider sin as levelled against God, not only compensative justice to the sinner, but justice to *himself*, requires that God should punish sin with infinite punishment. Sin casts contempt on the majesty and greatness of God. The language of it is, that he is a being not worthy to be honoured or feared; not so great that his displeasure is worthy to be dreaded; and that his threatenings of wrath are despicable. Now, the proper vindication or defence of God's majesty in such a case, is, for God to contradict this language in his providence towards sin that speaks it, or to contradict the language of sin in the event and fruit of sin. Sin says, God is a being not worthy that the sinner should fear him; and so affronts him without fear. The proper vindication of God's majesty from this is, for God to show, by the event, that he is an infinitely fearful and terrible being. The language of sin is, that God's displeasure is not worthy that the sinner should regard it. The proper vindication of God from this language is, to show, by the experience of the event, the infinite dreadfulness of that slighted displeasure. In such a case, the majesty of God requires this vindication. It cannot be properly vindicated without it, neither can God be just to *himself* without this vindication; unless there could be such a thing as a repentance, humiliation, and sorrow, proportionable to the greatness of the majesty despised. When the majesty of God has such contempt cast upon it, and is trodden down in the dust by vile sinners, it is not fit that this infinite and glorious majesty should be left under this contempt; but that it should be vindicated by something opposite to the contempt, which is equivalent to it, or of weight sufficient to balance it; either an equivalent punishment, or an equivalent sorrow and repentance. So that sin must be punished with an infinite punishment.

§ 8. There is a necessity of sin's being punished with a condign punishment, from the *law* of God that threatens such punishment. All but Epicurians will own, that all moral agents, are subjects of God's moral government: and that, therefore, he has given a law to his creatures. But if God has given a law to his creatures, that law must have sanctions, *i. e.* it must be enforced with threatenings of punishment; otherwise it fails of having the nature of a law, and is only of the nature of counsel, or advice; or rather of a request. For one being to express his inclination, or will, to another, concerning any thing he would receive from him, any love or respect, without any threatening annexed, but leaving it with the person applied to, whether he will grant it or not, supposing that his refusal will be with impunity; is properly of the nature of a request. It does not amount to counsel or advice; because, when we give counsel to others, it is for their interest. But when we express

our desire or will of something we would receive, from them, with impunity to them whether they grant it or not, this is more properly requesting than counselling. No doubt it falls far short of the nature of law-giving. For such an expression of one's will as this, is an expression of will, without any expression of authority. It holds forth no authority, for us merely to manifest our wills or inclinations to another; nor indeed does it exhibit any authority over a person applied to, to promise him rewards. So persons may, and often do promise rewards to others, for doing those things that they have no power to oblige them to. So may persons do to their equals: So may a king do to others who are not his subjects. This is rather bargaining with others, than giving them laws. That expression of will only is a law, which is exhibited in such a manner as to express the law-giver's power over the person to whom it is manifested, expressing his power of disposal of him, according as he complies or refuses; that which shows power over him, so as to oblige him to comply, or to make it be to his cost if he refuses.

§ 9. For the same reason, that it is necessary the divine law should have a threatening of condign punishment annexed, it is also necessary that the threatening should be fulfilled. For the threatening wholly relates to the execution. If it had no connexion with execution, it would be wholly void, and would be as no threatening: and so far as there is not a connexion with execution, whether that be in a greater or lesser degree; so far, and in such a degree, is it void, and so far approaches to the nature of no threatening, as much as if that degree of unconnexion was expressed in the threatening. As for instance, if sin fails of threatened punishment half the times, this makes void the threatening in one half of it, and brings it down to be no more than if the threatening had expressed only so much, that sin should be punished half the times that it is committed. But if it be needful that all sin in every act should be forbidden by law, *i. e.* with a prohibition and threatening of condign punishment annexed, and that the threatening of sin with condign punishment should be universal; then it is necessary that it should be universally executed. A threatening of an omniscient and true being can be supposed to signify no more punishment than is intended to be executed, and is not necessarily to be understood of any more. A threatening, if it signifies any thing, is a signification of some connexion between the crime and the punishment. But the threatening of an omniscient being, cannot be understood to signify any more connexion with punishment than there is.

§ 10. If it be needful that there should be a divine law, it is needful that this divine law should be maintained in the nature, life, authority and strength that is proper to it as a law. The

nature, life, authority and strength of every law, consists in its sanction, by which the deed is connected with the compensation; and therefore depends on the strength and firmness of that connexion. In proportion as that connexion is weary, in such proportion does the law lose its strength, and fails of the proper nature and power of a law, and degenerates towards the nature of requests and expressions of will and desire to receive love and respect, without being enforced with authority. Dispensing with the law by the lawgiver, so as not to fulfil or execute it, in its nature does not differ from an abrogation of it, unless the law contains in itself such a clause, that it shall or may be dispensed with, and not fulfilled in certain cases, or when the lawgiver pleases. But this would be a contradiction. For, if the law contained such a clause: then, not to fulfil it, would be according to the law, and a fulfilment of the law; and therefore there would be no dispensing with the law in it, because it is doing what the law itself directs to. The law may contain clauses of exception, wherein particular cases may be excepted from general rules; but it cannot make provision for a dispensation. And therefore, for the lawgiver to dispense with it, is indeed to abrogate it. Though it may not be an abrogating it wholly, yet it is in some measure changing it. To dispense with the law, in not fulfilling it on him that breaks it, is making the rule give place to the sinner. But certainly it is an indecent thing, that sin, which provokes the execution, should procure the abrogation of the law. The necessity of fulfilling the law, in the sense mentioned, appears from Matt. v. 18. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled." The words will allow of no other tolerable sense.

§ II. It is necessary that the law of God should be maintained and executed, and not dispensed with or abrogated for the sake of the sinner, for the following reasons:

The *nature* and being of the law requires it. For, as has been already shown, by such dispensation it loses the life and authority of a law, as it respects the subject. But it does not only fail of being a law in this respect; it fails of being a rule to the Supreme Judge. The law is the great rule of righteousness and decorum, that the Supreme and Universal Rector has established and published, for the regulation of things in the commonwealth of the universality of intelligent beings and moral agents; a rule, by which things are not only to be regulated between one subject and another, but between the king and subjects; that it may be a rule of judgment to the one, as well as a rule of duty to the other. It is but reasonable to suppose, that such a rule should be established and published for the benefit of all that belong to this universal common-

wealth, to be a rule to direct both their actions towards each other, and their expectations from each other, that they may have a fixed and known rule by which they are to act and to be dealt with, to be both active and passive as members of this commonwealth. The subject is most nearly concerned, not only in the measure of his own actions, but also in the consequences of them, or the method of his judge's determinations concerning him. None that own the existence of a divine law, with threatenings annexed, can deny that there actually is such a rule as this, that relates both to the manner of the creature's acting, and also the judge's acting towards him as subject to that law. For none will deny, that the precepts relate to the manner of the subject's acting, and that the threatenings relate to the manner of the judge's proceeding with the subject, in consequence of his obedience or disobedience. It is needful that this great rule for managing affairs in this universal commonwealth, should be fixed and settled, and not be vague and uncertain. So far as it fails of this, it ceases to be of the nature of a rule. For it is essential to the nature of a rule, that it be something fixed. But if it be needful that it be something fixed, then it is needful that the author, and he by whom it subsists, should maintain and fulfil it, and not depart from it; because that is in a measure to disannul it. If he doth so, therein the rule becomes unfixed, and it so far ceases to be a rule to the judge.

§ 12. That the law should be made to give place to the sinner, is contrary to the direct *design* of the law. For the law was made, that the subject should be regulated by it, and give place to it; and not to be regulated by the subject, and to give place to him, especially to a wicked, vile, rebellious subject. The law is made, that it might prevent sin, and cause it not to be; and not that sin should disannul the law and cause it not to be. Therefore it would be very indecent for the Supreme Rector to cause this great rule to give place to the rebellion of the sinner.

§ 13. It is in nowise fit that this great rule should be abrogated and give place to the opposition and violation of the rebellious subject, on account of the *perfection* of the law, and as it is an expression of the perfection of the lawgiver. The holiness, and rectitude, and goodness of this great rule, which the Supreme Lawgiver has established for the regulation of the commonwealth of moral agents, and its universal fitness, wisdom, and absolute perfection, render a partial abrogation for the sake of them that dislike it, and will not submit to it, needless and unseemly. If the great rule should be set aside, for the sake of the rebel, it would carry too much of the face of acknowledgment, in the lawgiver, of want of wisdom and foresight, or of some defect, in point of holiness or right-

cousness, in his law. He that breaks the law, finds fault with it, and casts that reflection on it, that it is not a good law; and if God should in part abrogate the law upon this, it would have too much the appearance of a conceding to the sinner's objection against it. But God will magnify his law, and make it honourable, and will give no occasion for any such reflections upon it, nor leave the law under such a reflection. If this great rule of righteousness be so excellent and good a law, it is not only unfit that it should give place to rebellion, as this would be a dishonour to the excellency of the law and lawgiver; but also a wrong to the public good, of which the Supreme Rector of the world has the care, and is the guardian. If the rule be perfect, perfectly right and just and holy, and with infinite wisdom adapted to the good of the whole; then the public good requires that it be strongly established. The more firmly it is settled, and the more strongly it is guarded and defended, the better and the more it is for the public good; and every thing by which it is weakened, is a damage and loss to the commonwealth of beings. But I have already shown how every departure from it, weakens it, unfixes it, and causes it to fail of the nature of a settled rule, and in some measure disannuls it.

§ 14. The sacredness of the *authority* of the Divine Lawgiver requires, that he should maintain and fulfil his law, when it is violated by a rebellious subject. I have before spoken of the greatness and majesty of his *Being*, how that is concerned in it—I now would consider the sacredness of his authority, as he stands related to his creatures as their Lawgiver. The majesty of a ruler consists very much in that which appears in him; that tends to strike the subject with reverence and awe, and dread of contempt of him, or rebellion against him. And it is fit that this awe and dread should be in proportion to the greatness and dignity of the ruler, and the degree of authority with which he is vested. But this awe and dread is by an apprehension of the terribleness of the consequences of that contempt and rebellion, and the degree of the danger of those terrible consequences, or the degree of connexion of that rebellion with those consequences: Therefore, if it be meet that this awe or this apprehension should be in proportion to the greatness and dignity of the ruler, then it is fit that the consequences of contempt of the Supreme Ruler of the world should be infinitely terrible, and the danger that it brings of punishment, or connexion that it has with it, be strong and certain, and consequently, that the threatenings which enforce his laws should be sure and inviolable. It is fit the authority of a ruler should be sacred proportionably to the greatness of that authority, *i. e.* in proportion to the greatness of the ruler, and his worthiness of honour and obedience, and the height of

his exaltation above us, and the absoluteness of his dominion over us, and the strength of his right to our submission and obedience. But the sacredness of the authority of a sovereign consists in the strength of the enforcement of it, and guard that is about it, *i. e.* in the consequences of the violation to him that is guilty, and the degree of danger of these consequences. For the authority of a ruler does not consist in the power or influence he has on another by attractives, but coercives. The fence that is about the authority of a prince, that guards it as sacred, is the connexion there is between the violations of it, and the terrible consequences; or, in other words, in the strength or sureness of the threatening. Therefore, if this connexion be partly broken, the fence is partly broken; in proportion as the threatenings are weak, the guard is weak. But certainly it is fit that the authority of the infinitely great and absolute Lord of heaven and earth should be infinitely sacred, and should be kept so with an infinitely strong guard, and a fence, without any breach in it. And it is not becoming the sacredness of the majesty and authority of the great παντοκρατωρ, that that perfectly holy, just, and infinitely wise and good law, which he has established as the great rule for the regulation of all things in the universal commonwealth of beings, should be set aside, to give place to the infinitely unreasonable and vile opposition that sinners make to it, and their horrid and daring rebellion against it.

§ 15. The *truth* of the lawgiver makes it necessary that the threatening of the law should be fulfilled in every punctilio. The threatening of the law is absolute: Thou shalt surely die. It is true, the obligation does not lie in the claim of the person threatened, as it is in promises: for it is not to be supposed, that the person threatened will claim the punishment threatened. And, indeed, if we look upon things strictly, those seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution to arise from an obligation on God in executing, properly consequent on his threatening. For the necessity of the connexion of the execution with the threatening, seems to arise directly the other way, *viz.* from the obligation that was on the omniscient God in threatening, consequent on the futurity of the execution. Though, strictly speaking, he is not obliged to execute because he has threatened, yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten, if he at the same time knew that he should not and would not execute; because this would not have been consistent with his truth. So that, from the truth of God, there is an inviolable connexion between absolute threatening and execution; not so properly from an obligation on God to conform the execution to the past absolute threatening, as from his obligation to conform his absolute threatening to the future execution. This God was absolutely

obliged to do, as he would speak the truth. For if God absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew would come to pass, then he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any can speak contrary to what they know to be the truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with perfect and inviolable truth, I cannot conceive. Threatenings are significations of something; and if they are made consistent with truth, or are true significations of any thing, they are significations of that which is true. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the thing threatened but if the futurity of the thing threatened is not true, then how can the threatenings be true significations? And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows, and contrary to what he intends; how he can speak true, is to me inconceivable.

§ 16. It is with absolute threatenings, as it is with predictions. When God has foretold something that shall come to pass hereafter, which does not concern our interest, and so is of the nature neither of a promise nor threatening, there is a necessary connexion betwixt the prediction and the fulfilment, but not by virtue of any claim we have to make; and so not properly by virtue of any obligation to fulfil consequent on the prediction, but by virtue of an obligation on an omniscient Being in predicting, consequent on what he knew he would fulfil; an obligation to conform the prediction to the future event. It is as much against the veracity of God, absolutely to threaten what he knows he will not accomplish, as to predict what he knows he will not accomplish; for to do either, would be to declare, that something will be, which he at the same time does not intend shall be. Absolute threatenings are a sort of predictions. God in them foretels or declares what shall come to pass. They do not differ from mere predictions, in the nature of the declaration or foretelling; but partly in the thing declared or foretold, being an evil to come upon us—a mere prediction being of a thing indifferent—and partly, in the end of foretelling. In a threatening, the end of foretelling is to deter us from sinning; and predictions of things indifferent are for some other end. Absolute threatenings are God's declarations of something future; and the truth of God does as much oblige him to keep the truth in declarations of what is future, as of what is past or present. For things past present and future, are all alike before God—all alike in his view. And when God declares to others what he sees himself, he is equally obliged to truth, whether the thing declared be past, present, or to come. And, indeed, there is no need of the distinction between present truth and future, in this case. For if any of God's absolute threatenings are not to be fulfilled, those threatenings are declarations or revelations contrary to future truth.

But such a threatening is a revelation of the futurition of a punishment. That futurition is now present with God, when he threatens: present in his mind, his knowledge. And if he signifies that a thing is future, which he knows not to be future; then the signification he gives is contrary to present truth, even contrary to what God now knows is future.—Again, an absolute threatening is a signification of the present intention of him that threatens; and therefore, if he threatens what he does not intend to fulfil, then he signifies an intention to be, which is not; and so the threatening is contrary to present truth. God's absolute threatenings are a revelation to his subjects, of the appointed measures of their Judge's proceeding with respect to their breaches of his law; and if they do not reveal what is indeed the intended method of the Judge's proceeding, then it is not a true revelation.

§ 17. There is a necessity of the fulfilment of God's absolute promises both ways, *viz.* both by an obligation on God to foretel or declare, or foredeclare, the future benefit, according to what he foresaw would be, and he intended should be; and also by an obligation on him to fulfil his promise consequent on his predicting, and by virtue of the claim of the person to whom the promise was made. And there is also an obligation on God to fulfil his absolute threatenings consequent on his threatenings, *indirectly*, by virtue of many ill and undesirable consequences of the event being, beside the certain dependence or certain expectations raised by God's threatenings, in the persons threatened, and others that are spectators; of which consequences God may be obliged not to be a cause. But threatenings do not properly bring an obligation on God, that is consequent on them as threatenings, as it is with promises. As to those threatenings that are not positive or absolute, they are not necessarily followed with the punishment mentioned in them, because the possibility of escaping the punishment is either expressed or understood in the threatening. But the divine truth makes it necessary that there should be a certain connexion between them, that as much punishment be inflicted as is signified by them. If certain suffering be not signified by them, then there is no necessary connexion between them and certain suffering, according to God's ordinary method of dealing with men, and that, therefore, they, as they would act rationally, have great reason to fear it, seeing that God does not see cause to reveal what he will do to them: if this be all that is really contained and understood in the threatening, then this is all that the threatening is connected with. Or, if the proper meaning of the threatening be, that such suffering shall come, unless they repent, and this be all that can be fairly understood, then the truth of God makes no more necessary. But God's truth makes a necessary connexion

between every threatening and every promise, and all that is properly signified in that threatening or promise.

§ 18. The satisfaction of Christ by his death is certainly a very rational thing. If any person greatly obliged to me, who was dependent on me, and whom I loved, should exceedingly abuse me, and should go on in an obstinate course of it from one year to another, notwithstanding all I could say to him, and all new obligations continually repeated ; though at length he should leave it off, I should not forgive him, unless upon gospel considerations. But if any person that was a much dearer friend to me, and one that had always been true to me, and constant to the utmost, and that was a very near relation of him that offended me, should intercede for him, and, out of the entire love he had to him, should put himself to very hard labours and difficulties, and undergo great pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness ; and the person that had offended should, with a changed mind, fly to this mediator, and should seek favour in his name, with a sense in his own mind how much his mediator had done and suffered for him ; I should be satisfied, and feel myself inclined, without any difficulty, to receive him into my entire friendship again ; but not without the last mentioned condition, that he should be sensible how much his mediator had done and suffered. For if he was ignorant of it, or thought he had done only some small matter, I should not be easy nor satisfied. So a sense of Christ's sufficiency seems necessary in faith. Abigail, when mediating between David and Nabal, when the former was provoked to wrath against the latter, and had determined to destroy him, 1 Sam. xxv. 24. "fell at David's feet and said, Upon me let this iniquity be, and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thy audience, and hear the voice of thy handmaid." And in verse 28. she calls Nabal's iniquity her iniquity. By this it appears, that a mediator putting himself in the stead of the offender, so that the offended party should impute the offence to him, and look on the mediator as having taken it upon him, looking on him as the debtor for what satisfaction should be required and expected, was in those days no strange notion, or considered as a thing in itself absurd and inconsistent with men's natural notion of things.

§ 19. Christ is often represented as bearing our sins for us : Isaiah liii. 4. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Verse 11. "For he shall bear their iniquities." Verse 12. "He bare the sin of many." And with an evident reference to this last place, the apostle says, Heb. ix. 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many : and to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." And with a plain reference to verses 4, 5, of this 53d chapter of Isaiah, the apostle Peter says, 1 Pet.

ii. 24. "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

The word translated here in Isaiah liii. 4. and 12. is נשא; the same word, and the same phrase, of bearing sin and bearing iniquity, is often used concerning things which are the types of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, *viz.* the Levitical priests and sacrifices. It was no uncommon phrase, but usual and well understood among the Jews; and we find it very often used in other cases, and applied to others besides either Christ or the types of him. And when it is so, it is plain, that the general meaning of the phrase is lying under the guilt of sin, having it imputed and charged upon the person, as obnoxious to the punishment of it, or obliged to answer and make satisfaction for it; or liable to the calamities and miseries to which it exposes. In such a manner it seems always to be used, unless in some few places it signifies to take away sin by forgiveness. *See Dr. Owen* on Heb. ix. 28. and *Pool's Synopsis* on Isaiah liii. And, concerning their laying their hands on the head of the sacrifice, see also *Pool's Synopsis* on Levit. i. 4.

§ 20. By *merit*, I mean any thing whatsoever in any person or belonging to him, which appearing in the view of another, is a recommendation of him to that other's regard, esteem, or affection. I do not at present take into consideration, whether that which thus recommends be real merit, or something that truly, according to the nature of things, is worthy to induce esteem, &c.; but only what actually recommends and appears worthy in the eye of him to whom it recommends the other; which is the case of every thing that is actually the ground of respect or affection in one towards another, whether the ground be real worth, or only agreement in temper, benefits received, near relation, long acquaintance, &c. Whatever it be that is by the respecting person viewed in the person respected, that actually has influence, and is effectual to recommend to respect is *merit* or worthiness of respect or fitness for it in his eyes.

By *patron*, I mean a person of superior dignity or merit, that stands for and espouses the interest of another, interposes between him and a third person or party, in that capacity to maintain, secure, or promote the interest of that other, by his influence with the third person, improving his merit with him, or interest in his esteem and regard for that end. And by *client*, I mean that other person whose interest the patron thus espouses, and in this manner endeavours to maintain and promote.

§ 21. Having explained how I use these *terms*, I would now observe the following things.

1. It is not unreasonable, or without foundation in the reason and nature of things, that respect should be shown to one on account of his relation to, or union and connexion with

another; or, that a person should be thought the proper object of regard, viewed in that relation or connexion, of which he is not the proper object himself, singly and separately; or, which is still the same thing, that a person should be thought worthy of respect on the account of the *merit* of the other person to whom he stands related, taking the word here as it has been explained.

2. Whenever one is thus viewed, as having a merit of respect on the account of another to whom he stands related, the merit of the other person is *imputed* to him; and these persons so far are substituted the one in the place of the other. This is plain; for the person now accepted, has not that merit in himself considered alone, but only as related to another that has merit in himself, and so is respected for the sake of the merit of that other; which is the very same thing as, in our consideration, *transferring* that merit from the other person to him, and viewing it in him as his merit, a merit whose recommending influence becomes his in some degree; so that in all such cases there is an imputation and substitution in some dogree. The recommending influence of the one, becomes the recommending influence of the other, or influence that prevails to ecommend the other; which is the same thing. Thus it is when any one respects a near *relation*, or the child or spouse of a *friend*, that is very dear and greatly esteemed for such a friend's sake, or shows the relative or friend greater regard, seeks his welfare more, and shows him more kindness than he would do if he were viewed out of such a relation or connexion, and entirely by himself. Thus it is reasonable and natural, that one should be respected for the merit of another, and so his merit be in some degree imputed to another, and one person be substituted for another, according to the natural sense of all mankind.

3. As it is the *relation* of one to another, or his *union* with him, that is the ground of respect shown him for the other's sake—and so the ground of substitution of the other in his stead, and of the imputation of the other's merit in some degree—as has been observed; so it is manifest, that the *greater* or nearer that relation is, and the stricter the union, so much the more does it prevail for the acceptance of the person, or the object of respect, for the sake of him to whom he is united.

4. If there be any such thing as an union of one person to another, as, for instance, a patron to a client, in such degree or manner as that on such account it shall be peculiarly fit to look upon them as completely one and the same, as to all that concerns the interest of the client, with relation to the regard of the friend of the patron; then especially may the patron be taken by his friend as the substitute of the client, and his merit be imputed to him.

§ 22. If it be inquired, what degree or manner of *union* may be looked upon as complete? I answer, When the patron's heart is so united to the client, that when the latter is to be destroyed, he from love, is willing to take his destruction on himself, or what is equivalent thereto, so that the client may escape; then he may be properly accepted as perfectly one with regard to the interest of the client; for this reason, that his love is such as thoroughly puts him into the place of the client in all that concerns his interest. His love actually puts him in the room of the beloved, in that suffering or calamity which, being his total destruction, swallows up and consumes all his interest, without leaving the least part of it. Therefore, love that will take that destruction, evidently takes in his whole interest. It appears to be an equal balance for it. His love puts him thoroughly in his client's stead. If his love were such as made him willing to put himself in the other's stead, in many cases where his interest was concerned, but yet not in a case where *all* is concerned, the union is not complete; he is partially, and not thoroughly united. But when the love of the patron is such as to go through with the matter, and makes him willing to put himself in the other's stead, even in the case of the last extremity—and where the beloved is to be utterly and perfectly destroyed—then he is, as to his love, sufficiently united, so as to be accepted as completely one by his friend, in all that concerns the client's welfare.

§ 23. Especially is the client's welfare properly and naturally regarded, for the sake of the patron that is very dear and worthy in the eyes of any person, when the way in which the patron expresses his desire of the client's welfare, is by suffering and being at expense of his own personal and private welfare in any degree, for the welfare of the client. Expending one's good or interest for another, is properly transferring the interest in the good expended, into the good sought: the expended good, which is the means, is properly set aside and removed, in the regard of him that is at the expense, and whose regard is placed on that good which is the end. The good of the price is parted with, for the good of the thing purchased; and, therefore, here is a proper substitution of one in the place of the other. In such a case, therefore, in a more special manner, will it be proper and natural for one in whose eyes the patron is *very worthy* and to whom he is *very dear*, to have regard to the welfare of the client for the patron's sake, or for the sake of the patron's merit; as, suppose the client of the excellent and dear patron, be a child or spouse in captivity, and the patron lays out himself exceedingly for the client's redemption, and goes through many and very great hardships, and is at vast expense for obtaining it.

§ 24. If the patron who seeks the welfare of the client, particularly and directly applies himself to the person who has so high an esteem and affection for him, expressing his desires of the client's welfare, and that what is expended for his sake be given to him; then especially is it natural that the person of whom his client's welfare is sought, should be ready to grant it for his sake, and it is still more highly proper and natural to regard the client's welfare on account of the patron's *merit*, or to reckon the merit of the patron to his client's account; if the merit of the patron consists, or especially appears in what he does for his client's welfare; or if the virtues and worthy qualities have their chief exercise, and do chiefly exhibit their amiableness in those excellent and amiable acts which he performs in seeking the good of the client. In this case, it is peculiarly natural to accept the client, on the account of the merit of the patron; for the merit is on his account, and has its existence for the sake of the client. More especially is it natural, when his merit, above all, consists and appears in the very expense of his own welfare for the welfare of the client, or in the act of expending or exchanging the one for the other. For, as was observed before, such expense is properly regarded as a price of the client's welfare; but when such merit is added to the price, this merit becomes the worth, value, or preciousness of the price; preciousness of another kind, besides merely the value of the natural good parted with. It adds a moral good to the price, equal to the natural good expended; so that the worthiness of the patron, and the value expended, are offered both together in one, as the price of the welfare of the client. The thus accepting of the patron's merit, as being placed to the account of the client, will be more natural still, if the patron puts himself in the place of that client, undertaking to appear for him, to represent him, and act in his stead, by an exceeding great change in his circumstances, clothes himself with the form of his client, goes where he is, takes his place in the universe, puts himself into his circumstances, and is, in all things, made like unto him, wherein this may be consistent with maintaining his merit inviolable. If the client be unworthy, and an offender, and has deserved ill of the person whose favour he needs, then abating and dismissing resentment, or lessening or withholding the evil deserved, for the sake of the merit of the patron, is equivalent to a positive favour for his sake, in case of no offence and demerit of punishment.

§ 25. If the person that needs favour, be an offender, and unworthy, then, in order to a proper influence and effect of the union and merit of a patron, to induce his friend to receive him into favour on his account, the union of the patron with his client, and his undertaking and appearing as his patron to

seek favour for him, should be in such a manner, and attended with such circumstances, as not to diminish his merit, *i. e.* so as that his union with, and intercession for the client, shall not in the least infringe on these two things, *viz.* the patron's own union with his friend, whose favour he seeks for the client, and his merit strictly so called, *i. e.* his own virtue. For if his own worthiness be diminished, by his union with one that is unworthy, then his influence to recommend the client one way, is destroyed one way, at the same time that it is established another. For that recommending influence consists in these two things, *viz.* his merit and his union with the client. Therefore, if one of these is diminished, or destroyed, as the other is advanced and established, nothing is done on the whole toward recommending the client. Therefore, in order that, on the whole, the client be effectually recommended, it is necessary that the patron's union to an offending, unworthy client, should be attended with such circumstances, that it shall not be at all inconsistent with these two things, his regard to his friend, and his regard to virtue and holiness: for in these two things consists his merit in the eye of his friend; and, therefore, it is necessary, that his appearing united to his unworthy and offending client should be with such circumstances as most plainly to demonstrate, that he perfectly disapproves of his offence, and unworthiness, and to show a perfect regard to virtue, and to the honour and dignity of his offended, injured friend. There is no way that this can be so thoroughly and fully done, as by undertaking himself to pay the debt to the honour and rights of his injured friend, and to honour the rule of virtue and righteousness the client has violated, by putting himself in the stead of the offender, into subjection to the injured rights and violated authority of his offended friend, and under the violated law and rule of righteousness belonging to one in the client's state; and so, for the sake of the honour of his friend's authority, and the honour of the rule of righteousness, suffering the whole penalty due to the offender, and which would have been requisite to be suffered by him, for the maintaining the honour and dignity of those things; and himself, by such great condescension, and under such self-denial, honouring those rights and rules by his obedience and perfect conformity to them; hereby giving the most evident testimony to all beholders, that although he loves his client and seeks his welfare, yet he had rather be humbled so low, deny himself so greatly, and suffer so much, than that his welfare should be in the least diminished, his authority weakened, and his honour and his dignity degraded.

§ 26. If the patron be, in the eyes of him whose favour is sought, of very great dignity, it is agreeable to reason and nature that this should have influence to procure greater favour

to the client than if he were of less dignity. And when it is inquired, whether there be a sufficiency in the patron and his relation to his client, to answer to such a degree of favour as is proposed to be attained for him; the dignity of the patron is one thing that is to be estimated and put into the scales, with the degree of favour sought, in order to know whether it be sufficient to countervail it. By dignity, I here intend, not only the degree of virtue and relation to his friend, of whom he seeks favour, but the greatness of the person of the patron.

If, in adjusting this matter, the dignity that is viewed in the patron and his friend's regard to him, be so great, that, considered with the degree of the patron's union with his client, there is a sufficiency to countervail all the favour that the client needs, or the utmost that he is capable of receiving, then there is a perfect sufficiency in the patron for the client, or a sufficiency completely to answer and support the whole interest of the client; or a sufficiency in his friend's regard to the patron, wholly to receive, take in, and comprehend the client with regard to his whole interest, or all that pertains to his welfare; or, which is the same thing, a sufficiency fully to answer for him as his representative and substitute, in all that pertains to his welfare.

§ 27. If the patron and client are equals as to greatness of being or degree of existence, and the degree of the patron's union with his client should be such (and that were possible) that he regarded the interest of the client equally with his own personal interest; then it would be natural for the patron's friend to regard the client's welfare for the sake of the patron, as much as he regards the patron's own personal welfare: because, when the case is so, the patron is as strictly united to the client as he is to himself, and his client's welfare becomes perfectly, and to all intents and purposes, his own interest, as much as his personal welfare; and therefore, as the love of his friend to him disposes him to regard whatever is his interest, to such a degree as it is his interest; so it must dispose him to regard the client's welfare in an equal degree with his own personal interest; because, by the supposition, it is his interest in an equal degree. But this must be here provided or supposed, *viz.* not only that so strict an union of the patron and client be possible, but also that it be proper, or that there be no impropriety or unfitness in it: because, if it be unfit, then the patron's being so strictly united to him, diminishes his merit; because merit, at least in part, consists in a regard to what is proper and fit; and if the degree of union be unfit, it diminishes the influence of that union to recommend the client one way, as much as it increases it another. But if the patron and client are not equals, but the patron be greater and vastly superior as to rank and degree of existence, it gives

greater weight to his union, as to its influence with the friend of the patron, to recommend the client; so that a less degree of union of the patron with the client may be equivalent to a greater union, in case of equality. Therefore, in this case, though the union be not so great as that his regard to the client's interest should be equal with his own personal interest, but may be much less, yet his regard to it may be such, that its recommending influence may be equivalent to that which is fully equal in the case of equality of persons; and therefore may be sufficient to answer the same purposes towards the client, and consequently to be perfectly sufficient for the client with regard to the client's whole interest. From these things, we may gather this as a rule whereby to judge, whether there be a sufficiency in the patron's union with his client, to answer for the whole interest of the client with the patron's friend, with respect to the degree of union of the patron, and the degree of greatness, where there is no defect of merit in other respects, *viz.* that the patron's union with the client shall be such, that considering jointly both the degree of greatness, and degree of union, the patron's union with his client shall be as considerable and weighty, and have as much recommending influence, as if, in case of equality of the patron with his client, the union between them was so great, that the patron's regard to the welfare of the client were equal to his own. Then the union of the patron has its measure and proportion according to the rule now mentioned, and so is sufficient to answer his whole interest; when the degree of his regard to his client's interest stands in the same proportion to his regard to his own personal interest, as the degree of the capacity of the client stands in to the degree of his own capacity; for the degrees of capacity are as the greatness or the degrees of existence of the person.

§ 28. When the patron's regard to his client is thus proportioned, that is, when he regards the client's interest as his own, according to the client's capacity, then such an union may most fitly and aptly be represented, by the client's being taken by the patron to be a part or member of himself, as though he were a member of his body. For men love each part of themselves, as themselves, but yet not each part equally with themselves; but each part as themselves, according to the measure of the capacity of the part. A man loves his little finger as himself, but not equally with the head; but yet with the same love he bears to himself, according to the place, measure, and capacity of the little finger. The most proper and plain trial and demonstration of this sufficiency of union of the patron with the client, consisting in such a proportion of regard to his welfare as has been mentioned, is the patron's being willing to bear sufferings for the client, or in his stead.

that are equivalent to sufferings which properly belong to the latter; which equivalence of sufferings must be determined by a joint estimation of these two things, *viz.* the degree of suffering and the greatness of the sufferer. When the effect of the patron's love to the client is a suffering for the client that is equal in value or weight to the client's suffering, considering the difference of the degree of persons; it shows, that the love to the client, which is the cause of this suffering, is also equal or equivalent to his love for himself, according to the different degree of the persons.

The most proper and clear trial of the measure of love or regard to the interest of another, is the measure of suffering, or expense of personal interest, for the interest of the beloved. So much as the lover regards the welfare of the beloved, so much in value or weight of his own welfare, will he be willing to part with for it. If the value of the welfare obtained, be, in the regard of the sufferer, fully equal to the value of the welfare parted with, then, there being an equal balance, no preponderation of self-love will hinder parting with one for the other. The love therefore is sufficient and equal to self-love, allowing only for the difference of capacity or greatness of the persons; as the sufferings are equal, allowing for the same difference of the degree of persons.

§ 29. There can be but one thing more requisite, according to the nature of things, in order to its being to all intents and purposes proper and suitable that the patron should be accepted as one with the client, in what pertains to the client's interest, and his merits being imputed to the client, and his having favour on the account of it; which is this, that seeing the client is an intelligent being, capable of act and choice, he should therefore actively and cordially concur in the affair; that the union between the patron and him should be mutual; that as the patron's heart is united to the client, so the client's heart should be united to the patron; that as there is that disposition and those acts appearing in the patron that are proper to the character and relation of a patron, in undertaking for the client to appear for him before his friend, as his representative, guardian, deliverer, and saviour, and condescending to him to do and suffer all for him needed for his help and advancement; so there must also appear in the client those dispositions and acts that are proper to the character and relation of a client, cleaving to him, committing his cause to him, and trusting in him, in an entire approbation of the patron's friendship, kind undertaking, and patronage; and not only an approbation of the patron's union to him, by which he avails for his being looked upon as one with him, but also of the patron's union to his friend, whose favour he seeks, which union with his friend avails to the acceptance of the patron; and

also an entire approbation of the benefits which the patron seeks of his friend for the client; or, in one word, a cordial and entire faith of the client in his patron. When there is thus a mutual union between the patron and client, and an union throughout between them both, and the friend whose favour is sought, together with those things before mentioned, there is every thing requisite in order to the fitness of the acceptance of the client on the account of the patron, and his receiving such favour from the patron's friend, as is requisite to all that pertains to the client's welfare: so that such an acceptance and such favour shall be in all respects proper, according to the nature of things, and common sense of intelligent beings, and of no evil or improper consequence.

§ 30. It was needful, that a mediator between two parties distant and alienated one from the other, in order to be the middle person to unite them together, should himself be united to both. Otherwise he could not be a bond of union between them. And if he be a mediator between God and guilty men, it was necessary that he should unite himself to them, or assume them as it were to himself. But if he unites himself to guilty creatures, he of necessity brings their guilt on himself. If he unites himself to them that are in debt he brings their debt on himself. He cannot properly unite himself to a rebel against God, and one that is obnoxious to God's wrath, and is condemned to condign punishment, to be a mediator to bring God to be at peace with him, without voluntarily taking his sufferings on himself; because otherwise his undertaking for, and uniting himself to such an one, will appear like countenancing his offence and rebellion. But if at the same time that he unites himself to him, he takes it upon himself to bear his penalty, it quite takes off all such appearance. He shows that though he loves the rebel that has affronted the divine majesty, yet he at the same time has the greatest possible abhorrence of the injury to God's majesty, and dishonour to his name, in that he regards the honour of God's majesty so much as to be willing to endure so extreme sufferings, that the divine glory and majesty may not be injured, but fully maintained.

§ 31. Christ suffered the wrath of God for men's sins in such a way as he was capable of, being an infinitely holy person, who knew that God was not angry with him personally, but infinitely loved him. The wicked in hell will suffer the wrath of God, as they will have the sense and knowledge, and sight of God's infinite displeasure towards them, and hatred of them. But this was impossible in Jesus Christ. Christ therefore could bear the wrath of God in no other but these two ways, *viz.* in having a great and *clear sight* of the infinite wrath of God against the sins of men, and the punishment they deserved; and in enduring the *effects* of that wrath. This it was most

fit that he should have, at the time when he was suffering in their stead, and paying their ransom to deliver them from that wrath and punishment. That he might know what he did, that he might act with full understanding at the time when he made expiation and paid a ransom for sinners to redeem them from hell; it was requisite that he should have a clear sight of the dreadful evil and *odiousness* of sin, and of the dreadfulness of the punishment from which he suffered to deliver them, otherwise he would not know how great a benefit he vouchsafed them in redeeming them from this punishment. Christ doubtless actually had a clear view of both those things in the time of his last suffering. Every thing in the circumstances of his last suffering concurred to give him a great and full sight of the hateful nature of the sin of man. For its odiousness and malignant nature never appeared so much in its own proper colours, as it did in that act of murdering the Son of God, and in exercising such contempt and cruelty towards him. Likewise, every thing in the circumstances of his last sufferings tended to give him a striking view of the dreadful punishment of sin. The sight of the evil of sin tended to this, and so did the enduring of temporal death, especially under such circumstances, and such extreme pain, God hiding his face, his dying a death that by God's appointment was an accursed death, having a sight of the malice and triumph of devils, and being forsaken of his friends, &c. As God ordered external circumstances to help forward this purpose; so there is all reason to think, that his own influences of Christ's mind were agreeable hereto, his spirit acting with his providence to give him a full view of those things. Now, the clear view of each of these must of necessity be inexpressibly terrible to the man Christ Jesus. His having so clear an actual view of sin and its hatefulness, was an idea infinitely disagreeable to the holy nature of Christ; and therefore, unless balanced with an equal sight of good that comes by this evil, must have been an immensely disagreeable sensation in Christ's soul, or, which is the same thing, immense suffering. But that equally clear idea of good to counterbalance the evil of sin, was not given at that time; because God forsook Christ, and hid himself from him, and withheld comfortable influences, or the clear ideas of pleasant objects. Thus, Christ bare our sins; God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and he bare the burden of them; and so, his bearing the burden of our sins may be considered as something diverse from his suffering God's wrath. For his suffering wrath consisted more in the sense he had of the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin, or of God's wrath inflicted for it. Thus Christ was tormented not only in the fire of God's wrath, but in the fire of our sins; and our sins were his tormentors; the evil and malignant nature of

sin, was what Christ endured immediately as well as more remotely, in bearing the consequences of it.

§ 32. Thus Christ suffered that which the damned in hell do not suffer. For they do not see the hateful nature of sin. They have no idea of sin in itself, that is infinitely disagreeable to their nature, as the idea of sin was to Christ's holy nature; though conscience in them be awakened to behold the dreadful guilt and desert of sin. And as the clear view of sin in its hatefulness necessarily brought great suffering on the holy soul of Christ; so also did the view of its punishment. For both the evil of sin and the evil of punishment are infinite, and both infinitely disagreeable to Christ's nature; the former to his nature as God, the latter to his nature as man. Such is human nature, that a great and clear, and full idea of suffering, without some other pleasant and sweet idea fully to balance it, brings suffering; as appears from the nature of all spiritual ideas. They are repetitions (in a degree at least) of the things themselves of which they are ideas. Therefore, if Christ had had a perfectly clear and full idea of what the damned suffer in hell, the suffering he would have had in that mere presence of that idea, would have been perfectly equal to the thing itself, if there had been no idea in Christ in any degree to balance it; such as, some knowledge of the love of God, of a future reward, future salvation of his elect, &c. But pleasant ideas in this clearness being in a great measure withholden by reason of God's hiding his face; hence, the awful ideas of eternal death which his elect people deserved, and of the dismal wrath of God of consequence filled the soul of Christ with an inexpressible gloom. Though Christ knew the love of God to him, and knew he should be successful in his sufferings; yet when God forsook him, those dismal views, those gloomy ideas so fixed and swallowed up his mind, that though he had the habitual knowledge of those other objects, yet he could not attend to them; he could have comparatively but little comfort and support from them; for they could afford support no farther than they were attended to, or were in actual view. Christ's great love and pity to the elect was one source of his suffering. A strong exercise of love excites a lively idea of the object beloved. And a strong exercise of pity excites a lively idea of the misery under which he pities them. Christ's love then brought his elect infinitely near to him in that great act and suffering wherein he especially stood for them, and was substituted in their stead; and his love and pity fixed the idea of them in his mind, as if he had really been they; and fixed their calamity in his mind, as though it really was his. A very strong and lively love and pity toward the miserable, tends to make their case ours; as in other respects, so in this in particular, as it doth in our idea place us in their stead, under their misery, with a most lively,

feeling sense of that misery, as it were feeling it for them, actually suffering it in their stead by strong sympathy.

§ 33. Hence we may see how the same thing, the same ideas that distressed the soul of Christ and brought on his amazing sufferings, engaged him to go through them. It was ordered that the bitterness of the cup, though exceedingly dreadful, was of that nature, that the tasting of that bitterness, was the thing that engaged him to go on to drink up the cup; and that as the bitterness of it arose from the clear idea he had then given him of the infinitely hateful and dreadful nature of sin. The more lively this idea was, the more dreadful was it to the soul of Christ; and yet, the more lively his idea of the hatefulness and dreadfulness of sin was, which consists in disobedience to God, the more did it engage him not to disobey that great command he had received of his Father, *viz.* That he should drink this cup, and go through those sufferings. The more he had a sense how dreadful it is to contemn the authority of God, and to dishonour his holy name; the more would he be engaged to remove and abolish this dishonour, and to honour the authority of God. The more he had a sense of what an odious and dreadful thing sin was, the more would his heart be engaged to do and suffer what was necessary to take away this dreadful and odious thing from those whom the Father had given him. It was the lively exercise of love and pity to those whom the Father had given him, that occasioned so lively a view of the punishment to which they had exposed themselves, whereby his soul was filled with dismay. But this lively love and pity at the same time engaged him to suffer for them, in order to deliver them from their deserved punishment. And as pity towards his elect excited a lively idea of their misery; so on the other hand, the increase of his idea of their misery excited strong exercises of pity, and this pity engaged him still to endure those sufferings in their stead.

§ 34. From what has been said, we may learn how Christ was sanctified in his last sufferings. The suffering of his soul in great part consisted in the great and dreadful sense and idea that he then had of the dreadful, horrid odiousness of sin; which was done by the Spirit of God. But this could not be, without a proportionable increase of his aversion to, and hatred of sin; and consequently of his inclination to the contrary, which is the same thing as an increase of the holiness of his nature. Beside the immediate sight he had of the odious nature of sin, he had that strong sense, and that great experience of the bitter fruit and consequence of sin, to confirm his enmity to it. Moreover, he was then in the exercise of his highest act of obedience or holiness, which, tending to increase the principle, the bringing forth of such great and abundant fruit, tended to strengthen and increase the root. Those last suffer-

ings of Christ, were in some respects like a fire to refine the gold. For, though the furnace purged away no dross, yet it increased the preciousness of the gold; it added to the finite holiness of the human nature of Christ. Hence Christ calls his offering himself up, his sanctifying himself; John xvii. 19. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Hence he calls those last sufferings a baptism that he was to be baptized with. It was a baptism to him in two respects, as it purged him from imputed guilt, and as it increased his holiness by the Spirit of God that gave him those terrible but sanctifying views. And so this is one way in which the Captain of our salvation is made perfect by sufferings; Heb. ii. 10. and v. 9. and Luke xiii. 32. Thus Christ, before he was glorified, was prepared for that high degree of glory and joy to which he was to be exalted, by being first sanctified in the furnace.

§ 35. Another way in which it was possible that Christ should endure the wrath of God was, to endure the *effects* of that wrath. All that he suffered was by the special ordering of God. There was a very visible hand of God in letting men and devils loose upon him at such a rate, and in separating from him his own disciples. Thus it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief. God dealt with him as if he had been exceedingly angry with him, and as though he had been the object of his dreadful wrath. This made all the sufferings of Christ the more terrible to him, because they were from the hand of his Father, whom he infinitely loved, and of whose infinite love he had had eternal experience. Besides, it was an *effect* of God's wrath, that he forsook Christ. This caused Christ to cry out, "*My God, my God*, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was infinitely terrible. Christ's knowledge of the glory of the Father, and his love to the Father, and the sense and experience he had had of the worth of the Father's love to him, made the withholding the pleasant ideas and manifestations of his Father's love, as terrible to him, as the sense and knowledge of his hatred is to the damned, that have no knowledge of God's excellency, no love to him, nor any experience of the infinite sweetness of his love. It was a special fruit of the wrath of God against our sins, that he let loose upon Christ the devil, who has the power of death, is God's executioner, and the roaring lion that devours the damned in hell. Christ was given up to the devil as his captive for a season. This antitype of Jonah was thrown to this great Leviathan, to be swallowed up as his prey. The time of Christ's suffering, was the time of the prevalency of the power of the devil, wherein Christ was delivered up to that power, as is implied in Luke xxii. 53. "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and

the power of darkness." And therefore, when his last sufferings were approaching, Christ said, John xiv. 30. "The Prince of this world cometh." He was let loose to torment the soul of Christ with gloomy and dismal ideas. He probably did his utmost to contribute to raise his ideas of the torments of hell.

§ 36. That God should all along require *sacrifices* in his church, and that something should be done, by all that worshipped him, to make *atonement* for their sins. Sacrificing obtained throughout the world, in all nations and ages; and, that such a multitude of sacrifices should be appointed; that sacrifices should be offered so continually, and on so many occasions, and joined with all their public worship; was a plain testimony of God, that a real atonement or satisfaction to his justice was necessary, and that God did not design in his manner of dealing with mankind, that men should be pardoned and accepted without atonement. And if there was nothing of true and real atonement and sacrifice, in those beasts that were offered, then doubtless they were an evidence, that there was to be some *other* greater sacrifice, which was to be a proper atonement or satisfaction, and of which they were only the presage and signs; as those symbolical actions which God sometimes commanded the prophets to perform, were signs and presages of great events which they foretold. This proves that a sacrifice of infinite value was necessary, and that God would accept of no other. For an atonement that bears no proportion to the offence, is no atonement. An atonement carries in it a payment or satisfaction in the very notion of it. And if satisfaction was so little necessary, that the divine majesty easily admitted one that bears no proportion at all to the offence, *i. e.* was wholly equivalent to nothing, when compared with the offence, and so was no payment or satisfaction at all; there he might have forgiven sin without *any* atonement. But if so, how came an atonement to be so greatly insisted upon, as is represented by all the prodigious expense and labour, and multitude of services, and ceremonies, and so great an apparatus, and so great pomp, which, with so much exactness, were prescribed to be continued through so many ages, respecting their typical sacrifices and atonements, and from God's church were propagated through the world of mankind? No mere creature can have any thing to offer to God, which is not his already: for all that he has is God's gift to him.

§ 37. Let us consider how a perfectly wise, holy and disinterested arbiter, whose office it should be to regulate all things within the whole compass of existence according to the most perfect propriety, would determine, in case the creature should injure the Most High, should cast contempt on the majesty, and trample on the authority of the infinite Lord of the universe:

whether he would not determine that in such a case the injury should be repaired, his majesty vindicated, and the sacredness of the authority thoroughly supported; and that it was very requisite in order to things being regulated and disposed most fitly and beautifully, that such injuries should not be forgiven in the neglect of this, or without due care taken of this matter. If it be fit that the honour of God's majesty should be maintained at all in any degree, (which I suppose none will deny,) then why is it not most fit that it should be maintained fully? If it would be quite improper and unsuitable, that the dignity of the Supreme Being, the sacredness of the authority of the infinitely great Governor of the world, should be entirely neglected, should be suffered at all times, and to the greatest degree, to be trampled on, without any care to defend or support it; and that the majesty of this great King, as to the manifestation of it, should be obscured by his enemies to the greatest degree, and that continually and for ever, without any vindication or reparation at all; then why is it not most suitable and most becoming, that the vindication of it should be thorough, and the reparation complete and perfect?

§ 38. What has been observed, may serve to show the reasonableness of the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ; and that it is most rational to suppose, that if God did determine to forgive such as had cast contempt on his infinite majesty, and on his authority, as the infinitely high Lord over all, and to take such into favour, infinite wisdom would some way or other so contrive the matter, that the injury done to the appearance or exhibition of the dignity and sacred authority of the great King, should be fully repaired, and his majesty entirely vindicated, and set forth in all awfulness, inviolable sacredness and worthiness of regard and reverence. It cannot here be reasonably objected, that God is not capable of properly receiving any satisfaction for an injury, because he is not capable of receiving any benefit; that a price offered to men satisfies for an injury, because it may truly be a price to them, or a thing valuable and beneficial; but that God is not capable of receiving a benefit. For, God is as capable of receiving *satisfaction* as *injury*. It is true, he cannot properly be profited; so neither can he be properly hurt. But, as rebelling against him, may properly be looked upon as of the nature of an injury or wrong done to God, and so God is capable of being the object of injuriousness; so, he is as capable of being the object of that which is the opposite of injuriousness, or the repairing of an injury. If you say, what need is there that God have any care for repairing the honour of his majesty, when it can do him no good, and no addition can be made to his happiness by it?—you might as well say, what need is there that God care when he is despised and dishonoured, and his authority and glory trampled on; since it does him no hurt?

It is a vain thing here to pretend that God cares only, because it hurts creatures' own happiness for them to cast contempt on God. Is that agreeable to the natural light of all men's minds, to the natural sense of their hearts, and to the dictates of conscience, which unavoidably and necessarily arise, after some very direct, most profane, and daring opposition to, and reproach of the Most High, that God is now angry and much provoked, only because the audacious sinner has now greatly hurt himself, and hurt his neighbours, that happen to see him? No, this is entirely diverse from the voice of natural sense in such a case, which inevitably suggests, that God is provoked, as one who will regard himself for himself, as having a direct respect for his dignity and majesty. And this is agreeable to the strictest reason. It is impossible, if God infinitely loves and honours himself, as one infinitely worthy to be loved and esteemed, but that he should, from the same principle, proportionably abhor and oppose opposition to, and contempt of himself. And if it be in its own nature decent and proper for him thus to love himself, then it is in its own nature fit and becoming in him to hate opposition to himself. And for the same reason, and from the same principle, God, when he is contemned and injured, and his authority and glory are trampled in the dust, will be disposed to repair the injury done to his honour, and raise his injured majesty out of the dust again.

§ 39. The *satisfaction* of Christ, by suffering the punishment of sin, is properly to be distinguished, as being in its own nature different from the *merit* of Christ. For merit is only some excellency or worth. But when we consider Christ's sufferings merely as the satisfaction for the guilt of another, the excellency of Christ's act in suffering, does not at all come into consideration; but only those two things, *viz.* Their equality or equivalence to the punishment that the sinner deserved; and, 2dly, The union between him and them, or the propriety of his being accepted in suffering, as the representative of a sinner. Christ's bearing our punishment for us, is not properly meriting that we should not bear it, any more than, if it had been possible for us ourselves to have borne it all, that would have been meriting that we should not be punished any more. Christ's sufferings do not satisfy by any excellency in them, but by a fulfilment. To satisfy by a fulfilment, and to satisfy by worthiness or excellency are different things. If the law be fulfilled, there is no need of any excellency or merit to satisfy it; because it is satisfied by taking place and having its course. Indeed, how far the dignity or worthiness of Christ's person comes into consideration, in determining the propriety of his being accepted as a representative of sinners, so that his suffering, when equivalent, can be accepted as theirs, may be matter of question and

debate; but it is a matter entirely foreign to the present purpose.

§ 40. The blood of Christ washes away sin. So it is represented in the scripture. But although the blood of Christ washes away our *guilt*, it is the Spirit of Christ that washes away *pollution* and *stain* of sin. However the blood of Christ washes also from the filth of sin, as it purchases sanctification; it makes way for it by satisfying, and purchases it by the merit of obedience implied in it. The sacrifices under the law, typified Christ's sacrifice, not only as a satisfaction, but as meritorious obedience. They are called a sweet savour upon both these accounts. And therefore we find obedience compared with sacrifice, Psalm xl. 6, &c.

§ 41. Late philosophers seem ready enough to own the great importance of God's maintaining steady and inviolable the laws of the natural world. It may be worthy to be considered, whether it is not of as great, or greater importance, that the law of God, that great rule of righteousness between the supreme moral Governor and his subjects, should be maintained inviolable. As to any objection that may be made from the practice of human legislators, their dispensing with their own laws, and forbearing to execute them, and pardoning offenders, without any one being made to suffer in their stead; the case is vastly different in the supreme Lawgiver and subordinate lawgivers, and in the Supreme Judge and subordinate judges. The latter give rules only to a certain small part of the commonwealth of moral agents, and with relation only to some few of their concerns, and for a little while. Human lawgivers are weak and fallible, and very imperfect in the exercises of a limited, subordinate, and infinitely inferior authority. But God is the great, infinitely wise, omniscient, holy, and absolutely perfect, Rector of all; to whom it belongs to establish a rule for the regulation of the whole universe of beings through all eternity, in all that concerns them in the exercise of an infinitely strong right of supreme, absolute dominion and sovereignty. The laws of men may be dispensed with, who cannot foresee all cases that may happen; and, if they could, have not both the laws and the state of the subject perfectly at their own disposal, so as universally and perfectly to suit one to the other. But there is no wise and good law, but that care should be taken that it ordinarily be put in execution; and the nearer any human law approaches to the supreme or divine law in perfection, and in extent of jurisdiction, the more care should be taken of its execution: the wisdom of nations teaches this. Besides, repentance may be proportionable and answerable, at least in some measure, to offences against men. And as to the public truth which is to be upheld in execution of the threatenings of human laws, there ought to

be great care to uphold it, according to the true intent and meaning of those threatenings. If all that is meant, and all that, by the very nature of the public constitution, (the foundation on which all their laws stand,) is to be understood by those threatenings, is that the punishment shall be inflicted, excepting when the exigence of the public requires otherwise, or when the pleasure of the prince is otherwise; then the public truth obliges to no more; and this being done, the public truth is maintained.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING FAITH.

§ 1. Faith is a *belief* of a *testimony*; 2 Thess. i. 10. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that *believe* (because our testimony among you was *believed*) in that day." 2 Thess. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief* of the *truth*." 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he *believeth* not the *record* that God gave his Son."

§ 2. It is the proper act of the soul towards God as *faithful*. Rom. iii. 3, 4. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." It includes a *sense* of glory and excellency, or at least it is *with* such a sense. Matt. ix. 21. "She said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." There is also in it a spiritual *taste* and relish of what is excellent and divine. Luke xii. 57. "Yea, and why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" Believers receive the truth in the love of it, and speak the truth in love. Eph. iv. 15. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

§ 3. The *object* of faith is the *gospel*, as well as *Jesus Christ*. Mark i. 15. "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." John xvii. 8. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Rom. x. 16, 17. "But they have not obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?—So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It includes a *knowledge of God and Christ*. 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." John xvii. 3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And a belief of *promises* and depending on them, is a great part of faith. Heb. xi. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," &c. Gal. v. 5. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

§ 4. Faith is a *receiving* of Christ. John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him; established in the faith, as ye have been taught; abounding therein with thanksgivings." And it is receiving Christ into the *heart*. Rom. x. 6—10. "But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and *in thy heart*, (that is, the word of faith, which we preach;) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." True faith includes *accepting* the gospel. 1 Tim. i. 14, 15. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and *worthy of all acceptation*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 2 Cor. ii. 4. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached; or if you receive another Spirit, which ye have not received; or another gospel, which ye have not *accepted*, ye might bear with him."

§ 5. It is something more than merely the assent of the un-

derstanding, because it is called *obeying* the gospel. Rom. x. 16. "But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath *believed* our report?" 1 Pet. iv. 17. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that *obey* not the gospel of God?" Rom. xv. 18. "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles *obedient*, by word and deed." It is *obeying* the doctrine from the *heart;* Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness," &c. This expression, "obeying the gospel," seems to denote the heart's *yielding* to the gospel in what it proposes to us in its calls: it is something more than believing the truth of the gospel. John xii. 42. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue."

§ 6. It is a *trusting* in Christ. Psal. ii. 12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that *put their trust in him.*" Eph. i. 12, 13. "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first *trusted in Christ:* in whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye *believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Many places in the Old Testament speak of *trusting* in God as the condition of his favour and salvation; especially Psal. lxxviii. 21, 22. "Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they *believed* not in God, and *trusted* not in his salvation." Rom. xv. 12. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles *trust.*" 1 Tim. iv. 10. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we *trust* in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that *believe.*

§ 7. It is a *committing* ourselves to Christ; 2 Tim. i. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have *believed*, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have *committed* unto him against that day." This is a Scripture sense of the word *believe*, as is evident by John ii. 24. "Jesus did not commit himself to them." In the original it is ουκ επιστευεν εαυτον αυτοις.

§ 8. It is *gladly receiving* the gospel; Acts ii. 41. "Then they that *gladly received* his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It is what may be well understood by those expressions of *coming* to Christ, of *looking* to him, of *opening* the door to let him in. This is very evident by Scripture. It is *taking* the waters of life, *eating* and *drinking* his flesh and blood, *hearing* Christ's voice, and *following* him. John x. 26, 27. "But ye *believe* not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep *hear* my voice, and I know them, and they *follow* me." Isaiah xlv. 22. "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else." It also consists in being *persuaded of*, and in *embracing* the promises; Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

§ 9. There is contained in the nature of faith a *sense* of our own *unworthiness*. Matt. xv. 27. 28. "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy *faith*." See concerning the centurion, Luke vii. 6—9: the woman which was a sinner, *ib.* ver. 37, 38. and especially 50; the prodigal son, Luke xv.; the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. 41. Consult also Hab. ii. 4. "Behold his soul which is *lifted up*, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his *faith*." Prov. xxviii. 25; Psal. xl. 4. and Psal. cxxxi. And *love* either arises from, or is included in faith, John iii. 18, 19. "He that *believeth not*, is condemned already; and this is their condemnation, that men *loved* darkness rather than light." 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the *love* of the truth, that they might be saved.—That they all might be damned who *believed* not the truth, but had *pleasure* in unrighteousness." Faith is being *a-thirst* for the waters of life. Rev. xxi. 6. It is a true cordial *seeking* of salvation by Christ; and heartily *joining* ourselves to Christ and to his party. It is to *hearken* to him as a prophet; to *yield* ourselves subject to him as a king; and to *depend* upon him as a priest. *Desiring* Christ, is an act of *faith* in him, because he is called the *desire* of all nations, Hag. ii. 7; that is, he that is to be the desire of all nations, when all nations shall *believe* in him and subject themselves to him according to the frequent promises and prophecies of God's word; though there are other things included in the sense, yet this seems to be principally intended. There belongs to faith a sense of the *ability* and sufficiency of Christ to save, and of his *fitness* for the work of salvation: Matt. ix. 2. 21. and 28. 29. Rom. iv. 21. "And being fully *persuaded*,

that what he had promised, he is *able* to perform." And a sense of his *readiness* to save, Matt. xv. 22, &c. It is what may be well represented by fleeing for refuge, by the type of fleeing to the city of refuge. Heb. vi. 18. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have *fled for refuge*, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The heart must *close* with the new covenant by *dependence* upon it, and by *love* and *desire*. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

§ 10. Upon the whole, the best and clearest, and most perfect definition of *justifying faith*, and most according to the scripture, that I can think of, is this, faith is the soul's *entirely embracing the relation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.* The word *embrace* is a metaphorical expression; but I think it much clearer than any proper expression whatsoever: It is called believing; because believing is the first act of the soul in embracing a narration or revelation; and embracing, when conversant about a revelation or thing declared, is more properly called believing, than loving or choosing. If it were conversant about a *person* only, it would be more properly called *loving*. If it were only conversant about a gift, an inheritance or reward, it would more properly be called *receiving* or *accepting*, &c.

The definition might have been expressed in these words, faith is the soul's entirely *adhering* to, and *acquiescing* in the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—Or thus, faith is the soul's embracing that truth of God, which reveals Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—Or thus, faith is the soul's entirely acquiescing in, and depending upon the truth of God, revealing Christ as our Saviour.

It is the whole soul assenting to the truth, and embracing of it. There is an entire yielding of the mind and heart to the revelation, and a closing with it, and adhering to it, with the belief, and with the inclination and affection. It is admitting and receiving it with entire credit and respect. The soul receives it as true, as worthy and excellent. It may be more perfectly *described*, than *defined* by a short definition, by reason of the penury of words: a great many words express it better than one or two. I here use the same metaphorical expressions; but it is because they are much clearer than any proper expressions that I know of. It is the soul's entirely acquiescing in this revelation, from a sense of the sufficiency, dignity, glory and excellency of its Author. The whole soul's active agreeing, according and symphonizing with this truth; all opposition in judgment and inclination, so far as he believes, being taken away. It is called *believing*, because fully believing this reve-

lation, is the first and principal *exercise* and manifestation of this accordance and agreement of soul.

§ 11. Adhering to the *truth* and acquiescing in it with the *judgment*, is from a sense of the glory of the revealer, and the sufficiency and excellency of the performer of the facts. Adhering to it, and acquiescing in it with the *inclination* and affection, is from the goodness and excellency of the thing revealed, and of the performer. If a person be pursued by an enemy, and *commit* himself to a king or a captain, to defend him, it implies his *quitting* other endeavours, *applying* to him for defence, *putting* himself under him, and *hoping* that he will defend him. If we consider it as a mere act of the mind, a transaction between spiritual beings, considered as abstracted from any external action, then it is the mind's quitting all other endeavours, and seeking and applying itself to the Saviour for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and delivering itself to him, or a being willing to be his, with a hope that he will save him. Therefore, for a person to commit himself to Christ as a Saviour, is quitting all other endeavours and hopes, and heartily applying himself to Christ for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and acquiescing in his way of salvation, and a hearty consent of the soul to be his entirely, hoping in his sufficiency and willingness to save.

From the excellency and sufficiency of the revealer and performer, we believe what is said is true, fully believe it; and from the glorious excellency of the Saviour and his salvation, all our inclination closes with the revelation. To depend upon the word of another person, imports two things: *first*, To be sensible how greatly it concerns us, and how much our interest and happiness really depend upon the truth of it; and *secondly*, To dare to act upon it, as if it were really true. I do not say, that I think these words are the only true definition of faith. I have used words that most naturally express it, of any I could think of. There might have been other words used, much of the same sense.

§ 12. Though hope does not enter into the essential nature of faith, yet it is the natural and necessary, and next immediate fruit of true faith. In the first act of faith, the soul is enlightened with a sense of the merciful nature of God and of Christ, and believes the declarations that are made in God's word of it; and it humbly and heartily applies and seeks to Christ; and it sees such a congruity between the declared mercy of God, and the disposition he then feels towards him, that he cannot but hope, that the declared mercy will be exercised towards him. Yea, he sees that it would be incongruous for God to give him such inclination and motions of heart towards Christ as a Saviour, if he were not to be saved by him.

§ 13. Any thing that may be called a receiving the revelation of the gospel is not faith, but such a sort of receiving it, as is suitable to the nature of the gospel, and the respect it has to us. The act of reception suitable to truth, is believing it. The suitable reception of that which is excellent, is choosing it and loving it. The proper act of reception of a revelation of deliverance from evil, and the conferring of happiness, is acquiescing in it and depending upon it. The proper reception of a Saviour, is committing ourselves to him and trusting in him. The proper act of reception of the favour of God, is, believing and esteeming it, and rejoicing in it. He that suitably receives forgiveness of his fault, does with an humble sense of his fault rejoice in the pardon. Thus, for instance, he that reads a *truth* that no way concerns his interest, if he believes it, it is proper to say he *receives* it. But if there be a declaration of some glorious and excellent truth that nearly concerns him, he that *only* believes it cannot be said to *receive* it. And if a captain offers to deliver a distressed people, they that only believe what he says, without committing themselves to him, and putting themselves under him, cannot be said to *receive* him. So, if a prince offers one his favour, he that does not esteem his favour, cannot be said heartily to *accept* thereof. Again, if one offended offers pardon to another, he cannot be said to receive it, if he be not *sensible* of his fault, and does not care for the displeasure of the offended. The whole act of reception suitable to the nature of the gospel, and its relation to us, and our circumstances with respect to it, is best expressed, (if it be expressed in one word,) by the word πιστις or *fides*.

§ 14. The word πιστις, *faith*, seems to be the most proper term to express the cordial reception of Christ and of the truth, for these reasons. *First*, this revelation is of things spiritual, unseen, strange and wonderful, exceedingly remote from all the objects of sense, and those things which we commonly converse with in this world, and also exceedingly alien from our fallen nature: so that it is the *first* and principal *manifestation* of the symphony between the soul and these divine things, that it believes them, and acquiesces in them as true. And, *secondly*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the gospel, appears principally under the character of a Saviour, and not so much of a person absolutely excellent: and therefore, the proper act of reception of him, consists principally in the exercise of a sense of our need of him, and of his sufficiency, his ability, his mercy and love, his faithfulness, the sufficiency of his method of salvation, the sufficiency and completeness of the salvation itself, of the deliverance and of the happiness, and an answerable application of the soul to him for salvation; which can be expressed so well by no other word but *faith*, or *affiance*, or *confidence*, or

trust, and others of the same signification; of which, πίστις or *faith*, is much the best, and the most significant; because the rest, in their common significations imply something that is not of the absolute essence of faith. *Thirdly*, we have these things exhibited to us, to be received by us, only by a divine testimony. We have nothing else to hold them forth to us.

§ 15. Faith prepares the way for the removal of guilt of conscience. Guilt of conscience, is the sense of the connexion between the sin of the subject and punishment; 1*st*. by God's law; and 2*d*. by God's nature and the propriety of the thing. The mind is under the weight of guilt, as long as it has a sense of its being bound to punishment, according to the reason and nature of things, and the requirements of the divine government. Faith prepares the way for the removal of this. Therefore there must be in faith, 1. a belief that the law is answered and satisfied by Jesus Christ; and 2. such a sense of the way of salvation by Christ, that it shall appear proper, and be dutiful, and according to the reason of things, that sin should not be punished in us, but that we nevertheless should be accepted through Christ. When the mind sees a way in which this can be done, and there is nothing in the law, nor in the divine nature, nor nature of things, to hinder it; that of itself lightens the burden and creates hope. It causes the mind to see that it is not for ever bound by the reason of things to suffer; though the mind does not know that it has performed the condition of pardon. This is to have a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation. When a man commits sin and is sensible of it, his soul has a natural sense of the propriety of punishment in such a case, a sense that punishment, according to the reason of things, belongs to him; for the same reasons as all nations have a sense of the propriety of punishing men for crimes. That easiness of mind which persons often have, before they have comfort from a sense of their being converted, arises from a sense they have of God's sovereignty. They see nothing either in the nature of God or of things, that will necessarily bind them to punishment; but that God may damn them, if he pleases; and may save them, if he pleases. When persons are brought to that, then they are fit to be comforted; then their comfort is like to have a true and immoveable foundation, when their dependence is no way upon themselves, but wholly upon God. In order to such a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation it must be seen, that God has no disposition, and no need, to punish us.

§ 16. Hence we learn, that our experience of the sufficiency of the gospel, to give peace of conscience, is a rational inward witness to the truth of the gospel. When the mind sees such a fitness in this way of salvation, that it takes off the burthen—arising from the sense of its being necessarily bound to punishment, through proper desert, and from the demands of reason

and nature—it is a strong argument, that it is not a thing of mere human imagination. When we experience its fitness to answer its end, this is the third of the three that bear witness on earth. The *Spirit* bears witness, by discovering the divine glory, and those stamps of divinity that are in the gospel. The *water* bears witness; that is, the experience of the power of the gospel to *purify* and sanctify the heart, witnesses the truth of it: and the *blood* bears witness by delivering the conscience from *guilt*. Any other sort of faith than this sense of the sufficiency of Christ's salvation, does not give such immediate glory and honour to Christ, and does not so necessarily and immediately infer the necessity of Christ's being known. Nothing besides makes all Christianity so to hang upon actual respect to Christ, and centre in him. Surely the more the sinner has an inward, an immediate, and sole dependence upon Christ, the more Christ has the glory of his salvation from him. In order to this sort of sense of the congruity of our sins being forgiven, and of punishments being removed, by the satisfaction of Christ, there must of necessity be a sense of our guiltiness. For it is impossible that any congruity should be seen, without comparison of the satisfaction with the guilt. And they cannot be compared, except there be a *sense* of them both. There must not only be such a sense of God's being angry, and his anger being very dreadful, without any sense of the reasonableness of that anger; but there must be a proper *sense* of the desert of wrath, such as there is in repentance. Sinners, under conviction of their guilt, are generally afraid that God is so angry with them, that he never will give them faith in Christ. They think the majesty and jealousy of God will not allow of it. Therefore, there goes with a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, a sense of God's sovereignty with respect to mercy and judgment, that he will and may have mercy in Christ, on whom he will have mercy, and leave to hardness whom he will. This eases of that burden.

§ 17. For a man to trust in his own righteousness, is to conceive hopes of some favour of God, or some freedom from his displeasure, from a false notion of his own goodness or excellency, and the proportion it bears to that favour; and of his own badness, and the relation it bears to his displeasure. It is to conceive hopes of some favour of God, from a false notion of the relation which our own goodness or excellency bears to that favour; whether this mistaken relation be supposed to imply an obligation in natural justice, or propriety and decency, or an obligation in point of wisdom and honour. This excellency we speak of, is either real or supposed; either negative, in not being so bad as others and the like, or positive. Whether it be natural or moral excellency, is immaterial: also, whether the sinner himself looks upon it as an ex-

cellency, or supposes God looks upon it as such. For men to trust in their own righteousness, is to entertain hope of escaping any displeasure, or obtaining any positive favour from God, from too high a notion of our own moral excellency, or too light a notion of our badness, as compared with or related to that favour or displeasure.

§ 18. The difficulty in giving a definition of faith is, that we have no word that clearly and adequately expresses the whole act of acceptance, or closing of the soul or heart with Christ. Inclination expresses it but partially; conviction expresses it also but in part; the sense of the soul does not do it fully. And if we use metaphorical expressions, such as embrace, and love, &c., they are obscure, and will not carry the same idea with them to the minds of all. All words that are used to express such acts of the mind, are of a very indeterminate signification. It is a difficult thing to find words to exhibit our own ideas. Another difficulty is to find a word, that shall clearly express the whole goodness or righteousness of the Saviour and of the gospel. To be *true*, is one part of the goodness of the gospel. For the Saviour to be *sufficient*, is one part of his goodness. To be *suitable*, is another part. To be *bountiful*, is another part, &c. The idea of a real good, or lovely object, that is conceived to be real, possesses the heart after another manner, than a very lovely idea that is only imaginary. So that there is need of both a sense of goodness and reality, to unite the heart to the Saviour. There is implied in believing in Christ, not only that exercise of mind, which arises from a sense of his excellency and reality as a Saviour: but also that which arises from the consideration of his relation to us, and of our concern in him, his being a Saviour for such as we are; for sinful men; and a Saviour that is *offered* with his benefits to us. The angels have a sense of the reality and goodness of Christ as a Saviour, and may be said with joy to *embrace* the *discovery* of it. They cannot, however, be said to believe in Christ. The Spirit that they receive, the notice that they have of Christ the Saviour is the same; but there is a difference in the act, by reason of the different *relation* that Christ, as a Saviour, stands in to us, from what he doth to them.

§ 19. That case of mind which arises from a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, may well be called a trusting in that sufficiency. It gives a quietness to the mind, to see that there is a way wherein it may be saved, to see a good and sufficient way, wherein its salvation is very *possible*, and the attributes of God cannot be opposite to it. This gives ease, though it be not yet certain that he shall be saved. But to believe Christ's sufficiency, so as to be thus far easy, may be called a trusting in Christ, though it cannot be trusting in him that he *will* save

us. To be easy in any degree, on a belief or persuasion of the *sufficiency* of any thing for our good, is a degree of trusting. There is in faith not only a *belief* of what the gospel declares, that Christ has satisfied for our sins, and merited eternal life; but there is also a *sense* of it; a sense that Christ's sufferings do satisfy, and that he did merit, or was worthy that we should be accepted for his sake. There is a difference between being *convinced* that it is so, and having a *sense* that it is so. There is in the essence of justifying faith, included a receiving of Christ as a Saviour *from* sin. For we embrace him as the author of life, as well as a Saviour from misery. But the sum of that eternal life which Christ purchased, is holiness; it is a holy happiness. And there is in faith a liking of the happiness that Christ has procured and offers. The Jews despising the pleasant land, is mentioned as part of their unbelief. It must be as the gospel reveals, or in the gospel notion of him, the soul must close with Christ. For whosoever is offended in Christ, in the view that the gospel gives us of him, cannot be said to believe in him; for he is one that is excluded from blessedness, by that saying of Christ, Matt. xi. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me."

§ 20. There is a hope *implied* in the essence of justifying faith. Thus there is hope, that I *may* obtain justification by Christ, though there is not contained in its essence a hope that I *have* obtained it. And so there is a trust in Christ contained in the essence of faith. There is a trust implied in seeking to Christ to be my Saviour, in an apprehension that he is a sufficient Saviour; though not a trust in him, as one that has promised to save me, as having already performed the condition of the promise. If a city was besieged and distressed by a potent enemy, and should hear of some great champion at a distance, and should be induced by what they hear of his valour and goodness, to seek and send to him for relief, believing what they have heard of his sufficiency, and thence conceiving hope that they may be delivered; the people, in sending, may be said to *trust* in such a champion; as of old the children of Israel, when they went into Egypt for help, were said to *trust* in Egypt.

§ 21. Faith is that inward sense and act, of which *prayer* is the expression; as is evident.—1. Because in the same manner as the freedom of grace, according to the gospel covenant, is often set forth by this, that he that believes, receives; so it also oftentimes is by this, that he that asks, or prays, or calls upon God, receives; Matt. vii. 7—10; Luke xi. 9. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his

son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? How much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Matt. xxi. 21, 22. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have *faith*, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree; but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: it shall be done; and all things whatsoever ye shall *ask in prayer*, *believing*, ye shall receive." Joel ii. 32. The prophet speaking there of gospel times, says, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Rom. x. 12, 13, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" quoting the forementioned place in Joel. The same expressions that are used in scripture for *faith*, may be well used for *prayer* also; such as coming to God or Christ, and looking to him. Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Prayer is often plainly spoken of as the *expression* of faith. As it very certainly is in Rom. x. 11—14. "For the scripture saith, whosoever *believeth* on him, shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that *call upon him;* for whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not *believed?*" Christian prayer is called the prayer of *faith*, James v. 15. And believing is often mentioned as the life and soul of true prayer, as in the forementioned place. Matt. xxi. 21, 22. Heb. x. 19, 22. "Draw near in full assurance of faith." James i. 5. 6. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in *faith* nothing wavering."— *Faith* in God, is expressed in *praying* to God. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is expressed in praying to Christ, and praying in the name of Christ; John xiv. 13, 14. And the promises are made to *asking* in Christ's name, in the same manner as they are to *believing* in Christ. John xiv. 13, 14. "And whatsoever ye shall *ask* in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall *ask* any thing in my name, I will do it." Chap. xvi. 23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall *ask* the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have *asked* nothing in my name; *ask*, and receive, that your joy may be full."

§ 22. The condition both of the first and second covenant is a receiving compliance with, or yielding to a signification

or declaration from God; or to a revelation made from God. A receiving or yielding to a signification of the will of God, as our sovereign Lord and Lawgiver, is most properly called obedience. The receiving and yielding to a strange mysterious revelation, and offer which God makes of mercy to sinners, being a revelation of things spiritual, supernatural, invisible, and mysterious, through the infinite power, wisdom, and grace of God, is properly called *faith*. There is indeed *obedience* in the condition of both covenants, and there is *faith* or believing God in both. But the different name arises from the remarkably different nature of the revelation or manifestations made. The one is a *law*, the other a *testimony* and offer. The one is a signification of what God expects that we should do towards him, and what he expects to receive from us: the other a revelation of what he has done for us, and an offer of what we may receive from him. The one is an expression of God's great authority over us, in order to our yielding to the authority: the other is a revelation of God's mysterious and wonderful mercy, and wisdom, and power for us, in order to a reception answerable to such a revelation.

§ 23. Faith is not all kind of *assent* to the word of God as *true* and divine. For so the Jews in Christ's time *assented* to the book of Moses, and therefore Christ tells them, that they *trusted* in Moses; John v. 25. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust." Yet the very thing that Moses accuses them for, was *not believing* in him, *i. e.* believing so as to yield to his sayings, and comply with him, or obey him, as the phrase in the New Testament is concerning Christ. And therefore Christ says in the next verse, "For had ye *believed* Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." There may be a strong belief of divine things in the understanding, and yet no saving faith; as is manifest by 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing." Not only trusting in Christ, as one that has undertaken to save us and as believing that he is *our* Saviour, is faith; but *applying* to him, or *seeking* to him, that he would become *our* Saviour, with a sense of his reality and goodness as a Saviour, is faith; as is evident by Rom. xv. 12. "In him shall the Gentiles trust." Compared with the place whence it is cited, Isa. xi. 10. "To it shall the Gentiles *seek*;" together with Psalm ix. 10. "And they that know thy name, will put their *trust* in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that *seek* thee." Which agrees well with faith's being called a *looking* to Christ, or *coming* to him for life, a *flying* for refuge to him, or flying to him for safety. And this is the first act of saving faith. And prayer being the expression of faith, confirms this. This is further confirmed by Isaiah xxxi. 2. "Wo to them that go

down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and *trust* in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they *look* not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither *seek* the Lord. When it is said, Psalm lxix. 6. "Let not them that *wait* on thee, O Lord, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that *seek* thee be confounded for my sake." —it is equivalent to that scripture, "He that *believeth* shall never be confounded." And when it is said, verse 32. "And your heart shall live that seek the Lord;" it is equivalent to that scripture, "The just shall live by faith." So Psalm xxii. 26., and Psalm lxx. 4. And so Amos v. 4. "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, *Seek* ye me, and ye shall live." And ver. 6. "*Seek* the Lord, and ye shall live." And verse 8. "*Seek* him that made the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning." Isaiah xvii. 7. 8. "At that day shall a man *look* to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel; and he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands; neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images." Isaiah xlv. 22. "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

§ 24. That there are different *sorts* of faith, and that all believing that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, &c. is not true and saving faith—or that which most commonly has the name of faith appropriated to it in the New Testament —is exceedingly evident by John vi. 64. "But there are some of *you* that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." Here all false disciples, that had but a temporary faith, that thought him to be the Messiah, but would fall away, as Judas and others, are said to be those that *believed not*, making an essential difference between their belief, and that grace that has the term faith, or believing, appropriated to it. Faith is a receiving Christ into the *heart*, in such a sense as to believe that he is what he declares himself to be, and to have such an high esteem of him as an excellent Lord and Saviour, and so to prize him, and so to depend upon him, as not to be ashamed nor afraid to profess him, and openly and constantly to appear on his side. See Rom. x. 8—13.

§ 25. Trusting in *riches*, as Christ uses the expression concerning the rich young man, and as the expression is used elsewhere, is an extensive expression, comprehending many dispositions, affections, and exercises of the heart towards riches: so faith in Christ, or trusting in Christ, is as extensive. The soul's active closing or uniting with Christ, is faith. But the act of the soul, in its uniting or closing, must be agreeable to the kind and nature of the union that is to be established be-

tween Christ and the saints, and that subsists between them, and is the foundation of the saints' communion with Christ. Such is the nature of it, that it is not merely like the various parts of a building, that are cemented and cleave fast together; or as marbles and precious stones may be joined, so as to become one: but it is such a kind of union as subsists between the head and living members, between stock and branches; between which, and the head or stock, there is such a kind of union, that there is an entire, immediate, perpetual dependence for, and derivation of nourishment, refreshment, beauty, fruitfulness, and all supplies; yea, life and being. And the union is wholly for this purpose; this derivation is the end of it; and it is the most essential thing in the union. Now, such an union as this, when turned into act, (if I may so say,) or an active union of an intelligent rational being that is agreeable to this kind of union, and is a recognition and expression, and as it were the active bond of it, is something else besides mere love. It is an act most properly expressed by the name of faith, according to the proper meaning of the word so translated, as it was used in the days when the scriptures were written.

§ 26. Trusting in a *prince* or ruler, as the phrase was understood among the Jews, implied in it faithful adherence, and entire subjection, submission, and *obedience*. So much the phrase plainly implies; Judges ix. 15. "And the bramble said unto the trees, if in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your *trust* in my shadow; and if not let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." We have an account of the fulfilment of this parable in the sequel —How the men of Shechem did not prove *faithful* subjects to Abimelech, according to their covenant or agreement with him, but dealt treacherously with him: verse 23. And how accordingly Abimelech proved the occasion of their destruction. The like figure of speech is used to signify the nation's obedience to the king of Assyria; Ezek. xxi. 6. Our trusting in God and Christ, is often expressed by our trusting in his shadow, and under the shadow of his wings, and the like: Psalm xvii. 8. and xxxvi. 7. and lvii. 1. lxiii. 7. and xci. 1; Cant. ii. 3; Isaiah iv. 6. and xxv. 4. Here see Ruth ii. 12. compared with chap. i. 16. John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son, απειθων." The force of the word may in some measure be learned from Acts v. 36, 37. and Acts v. 40. "And to him they agreed or *obeyed*;" the word is the same. And Acts xxiii. 21. "But do not thou *yield* unto them;" the word is the same in the Greek. Acts xxvi. 19. "I was not *disobedient* (απειθης) to the heavenly vision;" Rom. i. 30. "*Disobedient* to parents, απειθεις." See also Acts xvii. 4. "Some of them *believed* (in the Greek επεισθησαν) and consorted with Paul and Silas." Acts xiv. 2.

"The *unbelieving* Jews, απειθουντες." Eph. ii. 2. "The spirit that now worketh in the children of *disobedience*, απειθειας." We may judge something of the force of the word πειθομαι, by the signification of the word whence it comes; πειθομαι is the passive of πειθω, which signifies to counsel, to move or entice, draw or persuade unto.

§ 27. It is fit that, seeing we *depend* so entirely and universally, visibly and remarkably, on God, in our fallen state, for happiness—and seeing the special design of God was to bring us into such a great and most evident dependence—that the act of the soul, by which it is interested in this benefit, bestowed in this way, should correspond; *viz.* a *looking* and *seeking* to, and *depending* on God for it; that the unition of heart, (that is the proper term,) should imply such an application of the soul to God, and seeking his benefits only and entirely, and with full sense of dependence on him. As the condition before was *obedience*, or rendering to God, so now it is *seeking* and *looking* to him, *drawing* and *deriving* from him, and with the whole heart *depending* on him, on his power and free grace, &c. Faith is the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel. But the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel, is the soul's active agreeing, and suiting or adapting itself in its act, to the exhibition God gives us of Christ and his redemption; to the nature of the exhibition, being pure revelation, and a revelation of things perfectly above our senses and reason; and to Christ himself in his person as revealed, and in the character under which he is revealed to us; and to our state with regard to him in that character; and to our need of him, and concern with him, and his relation to us, and to the benefits to us, with which he is exhibited and offered to us in that revelation; and to the great design of God in that method and divine contrivance of salvation revealed. But the most proper name for such an active union of the soul to Christ, as this, of any that language affords, is *faith*.

§ 28. The revelation or exhibition that God *first* made of himself, was of his authority, demanding and requiring of us, that we should render something to him that nature and reason required. The act of the soul that is suitable to such an exhibition, may be expressed by *submitting*, *doing*, *obeying* and *rendering* to God. The exhibition which God makes of himself, *since* our fall, in the gospel, is not of his power and authority, as demanding of us, but of his sufficiency for us, as needy, empty, helpless: and of his grace and mercy to us, as unworthy and miserable. And the exhibition is by pure revelation of things quite above all our senses and reason, or the reach of any created faculties, being of the mere good pleasure

of God. The act in us, that is proper and suitable to, and well according to such an exhibition as this, may be expressed by such names as, believing, seeking, looking, depending, acquiescing, or, in one word, *faith*.

§ 29. That *believing*, in the New Testament, is much the same as *trusting*, in the Old, is confirmed by comparing Jer. xvii. 5. "Cursed is the man that *trusteth* in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord;" ver. 7. "Blessed is the man that *trusteth* in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is,"—with Heb. iii. 12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of *unbelief*, in departing from the living God." It also is confirmed by this, that trusting God, and hoping in him, are used in the Old Testament as expressions of the same import. So hope is often in the New Testament used to signify the same thing that, in other places, is signified by faith. Rom. xv. 12, 13. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in *believing*, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Compare Dan. iii. 38. with Dan. vi. 23. and Heb. xi. 33, 34.

§ 30. That saving faith implies in its nature *divine love*, is manifest by 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that *loveth* him that begat, *loveth* him also that is begotten of him." The apostle's design in this verse, seems to be, to show the connexion there is between a true and sincere respect to God, and a respect to and union with Christ; so that he who is united to the Son, is so to the Father, and *vice versa*. As he *believes* in Christ, and so *loves* him, it is evident that he is a child of God. He, whose heart is united to the Father, is so to the Son. He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. (Compare chap. ii. 22, 23, 24. and chap. iv. 15. with John xiv. 1. and John xv. 23, 24.) This shows, that *love* is the main thing in saving *faith*, the life and power of it, by which it produces great effects; agreeably to what the apostle Paul says, when he calls saving faith, *faith effectual by love*.

§ 31. The distinction of the several constituent parts, or acts of faith, into *assent*, *consent*, and *affiance*, if strictly examined, will appear not to be proper and just, or according to the truth and nature of things; because the parts are not all entirely distinct one from another, and so are in some measure confounded. For the *last*, viz. affiance, *implies* the other two, assent and consent; and is nothing else but a man's assent and consent, with particular relation or application to himself and his own case, together with the effect of all in his own quietness and comfort of mind, and boldness in venturing on this foundation, in conduct and practice.

Affiance consists in these five things: 1. Consent to something proposed, to be obtained by another person, as good, eligible or desirable. 2. Assent of the judgment to the reality of the good, as to be obtained; that he is sufficient, faithful, &c. 3. The mind's applying itself to him for it, which is no other than the soul's desiring him to make it possessed of this good. 4. Hoping that the good will be obtained in this way; which hope consists in expectation of the good, and in some ease, quietness, or comfort of mind arising from this expectation. 5. Adventuring some interest on this hope in practice; which consists either in doing something that implies trouble, or brings expense or suffering, or in omitting something that we should otherwise do; by which omission some good is foregone, or some evil is incurred. If these acts cannot in strictness all take place at the same moment of time, though they follow one another in the order of nature, yet they are all implied in the act that is exercised the first moment, so far as that act is of such a nature as implies a necessary tendency to what follows. In these three last especially consists man's *committing himself to Christ as a Saviour.* In the third and fourth especially consists the soul's *looking to Christ as a Saviour.*

§ 32. In that consent to the way or method of salvation, which there is in saving faith, the heart has especially respect to two things in that method, that are the peculiar glory of it, and whereby it is peculiarly contrary to corrupt nature.

1. Its being a way wherein God is *exalted*, and man *debased.* God is made all in all, and man nothing. God is magnified as self-sufficient and all-sufficient, and as being all in all to us; his power and his grace, and Christ's satisfaction and merits, being all: and man is annihilated; his power, his righteousness, his dignity, his works, are made as nothing.

2. Its being so *holy* a way. It is a way of mere mercy, yet of *holy* mercy; mercy in saving the sinner, but showing no favour or countenance to sin; a way of free grace, yet of holy grace; not grace exercised to the prejudice of God's holiness, but in such a way as peculiarly to manifest God's hatred of sin, and opposition to it, and strict justice in punishing it, and that he will by no means clear the guilty; every way manifesting the infinite evil and odiousness of sin, much more than if there had been no salvation offered. Therefore, *humiliation* and *holiness* are the chief ingredients in the act of consent to this way of salvation.

§ 33. In these things I have spoken only of a consent to the *way* or *method* of salvation. But in saving faith is included also a consent to the salvation *itself*, or the benefit procured. What is peculiarly contrary to this in corrupt nature, is a worldly spirit; and therefore in order to this act of consent, there must be mortification to, or weanedness from, the world, and a self-

ing of all for the pearl of great price. Besides all these, there is in saving faith a consent to *Christ himself*, or a closing of the heart or inclination with the person of Christ. This implies *humiliation;* for as long as men deify themselves, they will not adore Jesus Christ. It implies *sanctification;* for Christ's beauty, for which his person is delighted in and chosen, is especially his holiness. It implies *forsaking* the world; for as long as men set their hearts on the world as their chief good, and have that as the chief object of the relish and complacence of their minds, they will not relish and take complacence in Christ, and set their hearts on him as their best good. The heart of a true believer, therefore, consents to these things exhibited in the gospel of salvation: The *person* who is the author of the salvation; The *benefit*, or the salvation itself; The *way* or *method* in which this person is the author of this benefit.

§ 34. Faith is often mentioned in the same sense as hearing, hearkening, yielding to, and obeying the gospel, obeying Christ, being obedient to the faith, obeying the form of doctrine, &c. Hence we may learn the nature of saving faith; that it is an accepting, yielding to, and complying with the gospel, as such a call and invitation; which implies the hearing of the mind, *i. e.* the mind's apprehending or understanding the call; a believing of the voice, and the offer and promises contained in it; and accepting, esteeming, prizing the person and benefits invited to; a falling in of the inclination, the choice, the affection, &c. It not only signifies dependence, as it appears in venturing in practice, but also as it appears in the *rest* of the mind, in opposition to anxiety; as appears by Luke xii. 22, &c. "Take no thought—how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!—Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,"—compared with Philip. iv. 6, 7. and 1 Pet. v. 7. This is agreeable to that phrase used for trusting in the Old Testament, "Roll thy burthen on the Lord." Matt. xiv. 30, 31. "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

§ 35. The following inquiries concerning saving faith, are important: Whether justifying faith, in its proper essence, implies, besides the act of the judgment, also an act of the *inclination* and will? Whether it properly implies *love* in its essence? What are the scripture descriptions, characters, and representations of *justifying* faith? What is the true *definition* of justifying faith, a definition which agrees with the scriptrue representation of faith, and takes all in? Whether the word *faith*, as used in the gospel, has a signification diverse from what it

has in common speech? Why the word faith, is used to signify a *complex* act of the mind? How far *trusting* in Christ is of the nature and essence of faith? Whether assent, consent and affiance, be a proper distribution of the various and distinct acts of faith? Whether *hope*, as the word is used in the New Testament, be properly distinct from saving faith? What does the word *trust* imply in *common* speech? What it implies as used in *scripture?* In what sense faith implies *obedience?* What is the nature of *self-righteousness?* How self-righteousness is peculiarly *opposite* to the nature of faith? In what sense there must be a particular *application* in the act of saving faith! Whether the first act of faith is certainly *more* lively and sensible, than some of the weakest of the consequent acts of saving faith? In what sense *perseverance* in faith is necessary to salvation? What sort of *evidence* is it which is the principal immediate ground of that assent of the judgment which is implied in saving faith?

§ 36. The general description of justifying faith is *a proper reception of Christ and his salvation*, or *a proper active union of the soul to Christ as a Saviour*. I say, *a proper reception*, which implies that it is a receiving him in a manner agreeable to his office and character and relation to us, in which he is exhibited and offered to us, and with regard to those ends and effects for which he is given to mankind, was sent into the world, and is appointed to be preached; and in a manner agreeable to the way in which he is exhibited, made known and offered, *i. e.* by divine revelation, without being exhibited to the view of ourselves; and the nature of his person, character, offices and benefits; and the way of salvation, as related to our faculties mysterious and incomprehensible: and in a manner agreeable to our circumstances, and our particular necessities, and immediate and infinite personal concern with the revelation and offer of the Saviour. An union of soul to his Saviour, and a reception of him and his salvation, which is proper in these respects, is most aptly called by the name of faith. As the *whole* soul, in all its faculties, is the proper subject and agent of faith, so undoubtedly there are two things in saving faith, viz. *belief* of the truth, and an answerable *disposition* of heart. And therefore faith may be defined, a thorough believing of what the gospel reveals of a Saviour of sinners, as true and perfectly good, with the exercise of an answerable disposition towards him. That true faith, in the scripture sense of it, implies not only the exercise of the understanding but of the heart or disposition is very manifest. Many important things pertaining to saving religion, which the scripture speaks of under the name of some exercise of the understanding, imply the disposition and exercise of the heart also. Such as, knowing God—understanding the word of God—having eyes to see,

and a heart to understand. And piety is called wisdom. So men's wickedness is called ignorance, folly, &c. A being wise in one's own eyes, implies an high opinion of oneself, with an agreeable or answerable disposition. For we do not *trust* in any person or thing for any thing but *good*, or what is agreeable to us; what we choose, incline to, and desire. Yea, trusting commonly is used with respect to great good; good that we choose, as what we depend upon for support, satisfaction, happiness, &c.

§ 37. Faith is very often in the scripture called *trust*, especially in the Old Testament. Now, trusting is something more than mere believing. Believing is the assent to any truth testified; trusting always respects truth that nearly concerns ourselves, in regard of some benefit that it reveals to us. It is the acquiescence of the mind in a belief of any person, who by his word reveals or represents himself to us as the author of some good that concerns us. If the benefit be a *deliverance* or preservation from misery, it is a being easy in a belief that he will do it. So, if we say, a man trusts in a castle to save him from his enemies, we mean, his mind is easy, and *rests* in a persuasion that it will keep him safe. If the benefit be the bestowment of *happiness*, it is the mind's *acquiescing* in it, that he will accomplish it; that is, he is persuaded he will do it; he has such a persuasion, that he rejoices in confidence of it. Thus, if a man has promised a child to make him his heir, if we say the child trusts in him to be made his heir, we mean he has such a *belief* of what he promises, that his mind *acquiesces* and *rejoices* in it, so as not to be disturbed by doubts and questions whether he will perform it. These things all the world means by trust. The first *fruit* of trust as being willing to do and undergo in the expectation of something. He that does not expect the benefit, so much as to make him ready to do or undergo, dares not trust it: he dares not run the venture of it. Therefore, they may be said to trust in Christ, and they only, that are ready to do and undergo all that he desires, in expectation of his redemption. And the faith of those that dare not do so, is unsound. Therefore, such trials are called the trials of faith.

But this is to be considered, that Christ does not promise that he will be the author of our final redemption, but upon condition; and we have not performed that condition, until we have believed. Therefore, the first act of faith is no more than this, the acquiescence of the mind in him in what he does declare absolutely. It is the soul's resting in him, and adhering to him, so far as his word reveals him to all as a Saviour for sinners, as one that has wrought out redemption, as a sufficient Saviour, as a Saviour suited to their case, as a willing Saviour, as the author of an excellent salvation, &c.; so as to be encouraged heartily to seek salvation of him, to come to him, to

love, desire, and thirst after him as a Saviour, and fly for refuge to him. This is the very same thing in substance, as that trust we spoke of before, and is the very essence of it. If a man offers another to rescue him from captivity, and carry him to his own country; if the latter *believes* the former will do it, and yet does not *desire* it, he cannot be said to trust in him for it. And if the thing be accounted good, and be believed, yet if the person to whom it is offered, does not like the person that does it, or the way of its accomplishment, there cannot be an entire trust, because there is not a full adherence and acquiescence of mind.

§ 38. The *conditions* of justification are, repentance and faith: and the freedom of grace appears in the forgiving of sin upon repentance, or only for our being willing to part with it, after the same manner as the bestowment of eternal life, only for accepting of it. For to make us an offer of freedom from a thing, only for quitting of it, is equivalent to the offering the possession of a thing for the receiving of it. God makes us this offer, that if we will in our hearts quit sin, we shall be freed from it, and all the evil that belongs to it, and flows from it; which is the same thing as the offering us freedom only for accepting it. Accepting, in this case, is quitting and parting with, in our wills and inclination. So that repentance is implied in faith; it is a part of our willing reception of the salvation of Jesus Christ; though faith with respect to sin, implies something more in it, *viz.* a respect to Christ, as him by whom we have deliverance. Thus by faith we destroy sin, Gal. ii. 18.

§ 39. As to that question, Whether closing with Christ in his *kingly* office be of the essence of justifying faith? I would say,

1. That accepting Christ in his kingly office, is doubtless the proper condition of having an *interest* in his kingly office, and so the condition of that salvation which he bestows in the execution of that office, as much as accepting the forgiveness of sins, is the proper condition of the forgiveness of sin. Christ, in his kingly office, bestows salvation; and therefore, accepting him in his kingly office, by a disposition to sell all and suffer all in duty to Christ, and giving proper respect and honour to him, is the proper condition of salvation. This is manifest by Heb. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;" and by Rom. x. 10. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The apostle speaks of such a confessing of Christ, or outward and open testifying our respect to him, and adhering in duty to him, as exposes to suffering, reproach and persecution. And that such a disposition and practice is of the essence of saving faith, is manifest by John xii. 42. 43. "Nevertheless, among the

chief rulers also, many *believed* on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess* him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;"—compared with John v. 44. "How can ye believe, which receive honour of one another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

2. Accepting Christ as a priest and king, cannot be separated. They not only cannot be separated, or be asunder in their subject, but they cannot be considered as separate things in their natures; for they are implied one in another. Accepting Christ as a king, is implied in accepting him as a priest: for, as a priest, he procures a title to the benefits of his kingly office; and therefore, to accept him as a priest, implies an accepting him in his kingly office: for we cannot accept the purchase of his priesthood, but by accepting the benefits purchased. If faith is supposed to contain no more immediately, than only an accepting of Christ as a mediator for our justification; yet that justification implies a giving a title to the benefits of his kingly office, *viz.* salvation from sin, and conformity to his nature and will, and actual salvation by actual deliverance from our enemies, and the bestowment of glory.

§ 40. Some have objected against a spiritual sight of divine things in their glorious excellent and divine form, as being the foundation of faith, which is a spiritual conviction of the truth or real *existence* of them; because, say they, the existence of things is in the order of nature *before* forms or qualities of them as excellent or odious; and so the knowledge of their existence must go before the sight of their form or quality; they must be known to be, before they are seen to be excellent.—I answer, It is true, things must be known to be, before they are known to be excellent, if by this proposition be understood, that things must be known really to exist, before they can be known really to exist with such and such beauty. And all the force of the objection depends on such a meaning of this assertion. But if thereby be intended, that a thing must be known to have a *real existence* before the person has a *clear understanding*, *idea*, or *apprehension*, of the thing proposed or objected to his view, as it is in its qualities either odious or beautiful, then the assertion is not true; for his having a clear idea of something proposed to his understanding or view, as very beautiful or very odious, as is proposed, does not *presuppose* its *reality*. But, in our way of understanding things in general of all kinds, we first have some understanding or view of the thing in its qualities, before we know its existence. Thus it is in things that we know by our external senses, by our bodily sight for instance. We first see them, or have a clear idea of them by our sight, before we know their existence by our sight. We first see the sun, and have a strong, lively, and clear idea of it in its quali-

ties, its shape, its brightness, &c. before we know there actually exists such a body.

§ 41. It is observable, that as trusting in God, hoping in him, waiting for him, &c. are abundantly insisted on in the Old Testament, as the main *condition* of God's favour, protection, deliverance, and salvation, in the book of Psalms and elsewhere; so, in most of those places where these graces of trust and hope are so insisted upon, the subjects of them are represented as being in a state of trial, trouble, difficulty, danger, opposition, and oppression of enemies, and the like. And the clearer revelation, and more abundant light of the New Testament, bring into clearer view the state that all mankind are in with regard to those things that are invisible, the invisible God, an invisible world, and invisible enemies, and so show men's lost, miserable, captivated, dangerous, and helpless state, and reveal the infinite mercy of God, and his glorious all-sufficiency to such wretched, helpless creatures, and also exhibit Christ in the character of the Saviour of the miserable, the great Redeemer of captives, &c. Hence faith, trust, and hope, are mostly fitly insisted on as the *duty* and *qualification* peculiarly proper for all mankind, and the virtue proper to be exercised in their circumstances towards God and Christ, as they reveal themselves in the gospel, as belonging to them in their character and relation to us, and concern with us, in which they are there exhibited; and as the grand condition of our salvation, or our receiving those benefits, which we, as sinful, miserable, and helpless creatures, need from them, and which Christ, as a Redeemer, appears ready to bestow.

§ 42. Dr. Manton reconciles the apostle James and the apostle Paul in the following manner, in his 5th volume of Sermons, p. 274.—"Justification hath respect to some *accusation:* now, as there is a twofold law, there is a twofold accusation and justification; the law of works, and the law of grace. Now, when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ's satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being neglectors and rejectors of Christ the Mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience; so that our righteousness by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness, with respect to the great law of God; and that we have only by Christ. If we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant of works, we allege Christ's satisfaction and merit. If charged not to have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by producing our faith, repentance and new obedience, and so show it to be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consists in the

pardon of our sins, and our acceptance in the Beloved, and our right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteousness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense, Christ's righteousness alone is our justification and righteousness. Faith and repentance, or new obedience, is not the least part of it. But in the second, believing, repenting, and obeying, is our righteousness in their several respective ways, *viz.* that the righteousness of Christ may be ours, and continue ours." See also *Dr. Manton on James*, p. 310, 311, 312, and 331, &c.

§ 43. The very *acceptance* of Christ in his priestly office, making atonement for sin by his blood, and fulfilling the law of God by his perfect obedience unto death—and so the very *approbation* of the attribute of God, as it is there exhibited, an infinite holy mercy—thoroughly secures holiness of heart and life in the redeemed of Jesus Christ. Acceptance and approbation will secure their conformity to the law of God, though, by this very mercy, and this very Saviour, they are set at liberty from the law, and are no longer under the law, as a law with its sanctions immediately taking hold of them, and binding them by its sanctions or threatenings, connecting and binding together its fulfilment and life, and its violation and death. Our heart approving of that holy mercy of God, which appears in the showing mercy to sinners—in a way of perfectly satisfying the law, suffering all its penalty, and perfectly fulfilling and answering its precepts—implies a heart fully approving the *law itself*, as most worthy to be fulfilled and satisfied, the authority that established the law, and to its infinite worthiness of being obeyed. It implies a heart entirely detesting sin, and in some sort sensible of the infinite detestableness of it, that we approve of God's making such a manifestation of his detestation of it, and approve of the declared fitness and necessity of its being punished with so great a punishment as the sufferings of Christ. Our accepting such sufferings as an atonement for our sin, implies a heart fully repenting of, and renouncing sin; for it implies not only a conviction that we deserve so great a punishment, and not only a mere conviction of conscience, but an approbation of heart of the connexion of such sin with such punishment, which implies an hatred of the sin punished. And the heart's entire approbation of such methods perfectly to fulfil the obedience of the law, by so great a person, and by his doing so great things, and denying himself so much, implies a very high approbation of this law, and authority of the lawgiver. Therefore, this acceptance of Christ as a Saviour, by his obedience and atonement, and an acceptance of God's holy mercy forgiving sin, and giving life in this way, does well secure *universal obedience* to the law of God as a law of liberty, and with a free and ingenuous spirit, by the obedience of chil-

dren, and not of slaves. Thus, the faith that justifies the sinner, destroys sin; and the heart is purified.

§ 44. It is said, "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; by which it is manifest, that there was some *great virtue* that the apostles and Christians in those days used to call by the name of *faith* or *believing*, believing that Jesus is Christ, and the like; which was a thing very peculiar and distinguishing, and belonging only to those that were born of God. Thereby cannot be meant, therefore, only a *mere assent* to the doctrines of the gospel, because that is common to saints and sinners, as is very evident. The apostle James plainly teaches in chap. ii. that *this faith* may be in those who are not in a state of salvation. And we read in the Evangelists, of many that in this sense believed, to whom Christ did not commit himself, because he knew what was in them, John ii. at the latter end, and many other places. When it is said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" thereby cannot be meant, whosoever has such an *assent* as is perfect, so as to exclude all remaining unbelief; for it is evident, that the faith of good men does not do this. Thus, a true believer said, Mark ix. 24, "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief:" and Christ is often reproving his true disciples, that they have so little faith. He often says to them, "O ye of little faith;" and speaks sometimes as if their faith were less than a grain of mustard seed. Nor can the apostle, when he says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," mean that whosoever has a predominant assent, or an assent that prevails above his dissent, or whose judgment preponderates that way, and has more weight in that scale than the other; because it is plain that it is not true that every one that believes in this sense, is born of God. Many natural unregenerate men, have such a preponderating judgment of the truth of gospel doctrines; without it, there is no belief of it at all. For believing, in the lowest sense, implies a preponderating judgment; but it is evident, as just now observed, that many natural men believe: they judge that the doctrine is true, as the devils do. And again, when the apostle says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" he does not mean, he that believes or *assents* that Jesus is the Christ, to such a certain *degree*, is born of God; but that whosoever at all performs that act which the apostle calls by that name, or whosoever has any thing at all of *that kind* of virtue the apostle calls *believing*, is born of God, and that he that is not born of God, has not that virtue that he meant, but is wholly without it. And besides, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that by this believing, which the apostle there and elsewhere lays down as such a grand note of distinction between those that are born of God, and those that

are not, is meant only a certain *degree of assent*. If this was the apostle's meaning, he would use words in a manner not consistent with the use of language, as he would call things nearly *alike* by such distant and *contrary* names: and would represent the subjects in whom they are, as of such different and contrary characters, calling one believer, and the other unbeliever, one the children of God, and those that are born of God, and the other the children of the devil, as this apostle calls all that are not born of God, in this epistle, (see chap. iii. 9, 10;) and would represent one as setting to his seal that God is true, and the other as making him a liar, as in the 10th verse of the context. And besides, if believers in this sense only, with such an infinitely small gradual difference, was all that he meant, it would be no such notable distinction between those that are born of God, and those that are not, as this apostle, and other apostles every where signify. Nay, it would not be fit to be used as a sign or characteristic for men to distinguish themselves by: for such minute gradual differences, which in this case would be alone certainly distinguishing, are altogether undiscernable, or at least with great difficulty determined; and therefore, are not to be given as distinguishing notes of the Christian character.

§ 45. If words are every where used after this manner in the Bible, and, by faith in Christ, as the word is generally used there, is meant only the assent of the understanding, and that not merely a predominant assent, nor yet a perfect assent, excluding all remaining unbelief, but only a certain *degree* of assent between these two, rising up just to such a precise height, so that he that has this shall every where be called a believer; and he whose assent, though it predominates also, and rises up as high as the other, within an infinitely little, shall be called an unbeliever, one that wickedly makes God a liar, &c.; this is in effect to use words without any determinate meaning at all, or, which is the same thing, any meaning proportioned to our understandings: therefore, there is undoubtedly some great and notable difference between the faith of those who are in a state of salvation, and that of those who are not; insomuch that without that very faith, according to the common use of language in these days, those who were not in a state of salvation, may be said not to believe at all. And besides, that virtue which the apostle speaks of as such a great and distinguishing note of a child of God, he plainly speaks of as a supernatural thing, as something not in natural men, but given only in regeneration or being born of God, which is the great change of men from that which is natural to that which is supernatural. Men have what is natural, by their being born in a natural way; but they have what is supernatural, by being born of God. But, says the apostle, "Whosoever believeth

that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." The same faith is plainly spoken of as a supernatural thing in the foregoing chapter, verse 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

§ 46. But common faith is not a supernatural thing, any more than a belief of any history. It is obtained by the same means. If one be natural, and the other supernatural, then undoubtedly the difference is not only such a gradual difference, differing but an infinitely little. If all lies in the degree of assent, let us suppose that a thousand degrees of assent be required to salvation, and that there is no difference in *kind* in the faith of others. How unreasonable is it to say, that when a man can naturally raise his assent to nine hundred and ninety-nine degrees, yet he cannot reach the other degree, by any improvement, but there must be a new birth in order to the other degree! And as it is thus evident, that the faith or believing that Jesus is the Christ, which the apostle speaks of in the text, is some virtue intended by the apostle, differing not only in degree, but in nature and kind, from any faith that unregenerate men have; so, I would observe, that this special faith of which the apostle speaks, that so differs from common faith, is not only a faith that *some* Christians only have obtained, but *all* have it who are in a state of salvation; because the same faith is often spoken of as that which first brings men into a state of salvation, and not merely as that which Christians attain to afterward. How often are we taught, that it is by faith in Christ we are justified; and that he that believes not, is in a state of condemnation; and that it is by this men pass from a state of condemnation to a state of salvation. Compare John v. 21. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life;" with chapter iii. 18. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And this faith that brings into a state of life, is thus expressed, John xx. 31. "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Thus it is manifest, that the faith spoken of in such texts, is the faith that all men have who are in a state of salvation, and the faith by which they first come into salvation; and that it is a faith especially differing in *nature* and *kind* from all common faith.

§ 47. That there is some kind of *difference* or other, is most apparent from the vast distinction made in scripture, insomuch that those who have *faith*, are all from time to time spoken of as *justified*, and in a state of *salvation*, having a title to *eternal*

life, &c. Rom. i. 16. "The gospel is the power of God to *salvation* to every one that *believeth*." And chap. iii. 22. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon *all that believe*." Rom. x. 4. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every* one that *believeth*." Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that *believe* are *justified*." In these and other places, a state of salvation is predicted of every one that believeth or hath faith. And by the supposition, they that have no saving faith are in a state of damnation; as it is also expressly said in Scripture, "He that believeth not, shall be damned," and the like. So that it is evident that there is a great difference between the virtue that the Scripture calls by the name *faith*, and speaks of as saving faith, let it be what it will, and all that is or can be in others. The difference must either be in the *degree* of faith, and in the *effects* of it, or it is in the *nature* of the faith itself.

§ 49. It is not merely a difference in *degree*. Matt. xvi. 15—17. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This must evidently be understood of a *supernatural* way of coming by this belief or faith; such a way as is greatly distinguished from instruction or judgment in other matters, such as the wise and prudent in temporal things had. So Luke x. 21, 22. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." So, to the same purpose, is John vi. 44, 45. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they all shall be taught of God: Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And what is meant is not merely that God gives it in his *providence*; for so he gives the knowledge of those wise and prudent men mentioned in the forecited passage. It is said, that he gives it by the teaching of his *Spirit*, as appears by 1 Cor. xii. 3. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And the common influences of the Spirit, such as natural men may have, are not meant, as appears by what the same apostle says in the same epistle, chap. ii. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of the Spirit of God, to which the apostle has a special respect, are the doctrine of Christ crucified, as appears by the beginning of the chapter, and by the foregoing chapter, which he says is to the Jews a *stumbling* block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And, that the influence of the Spirit, in which this saving faith is given, is not any *common influence*, or any thing like it, but is that influence by which men are God's workmanship, or made new creatures, is evident by Ephesians ii. 8, 9, 10. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." And what makes the argument yet more clear and demonstrative is, that it is mentioned as one of the distinguishing characters of saving faith, that it is the faith of the operation of God; Col. ii. 12. "You are risen with him through the *faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead." Now, would this faith be any *distinguishing* character of the true Christian, if it were not a faith of a *different kind* from that which others may have? Now is it reasonable to suppose, that such *distinctions* as these would be taught, as taking place between *saving* faith, and *common* faith, if there were no *essential* difference, but only a gradual difference, and they approached infinitely near to each other?

§ 49. The distinguishing epithets and *characters* ascribed to *saving* faith in scripture, are such as denote the difference to be in *nature* and *kind*, and not in degree only. One distinguishing epithet is *precious;* 2 Peter i. 1. "Like precious faith with us." Now, preciousness is what signifies more properly something of the *quality* than of the *degree;* as preciousness in gold is more properly the designation of the quality of that kind of substance, than the quantity. And therefore, when gold is tried in the fire to see whether it be true gold or not, it is not the quantity of the substance that is tried by the fire, but the precious *nature* of the substance. So it is when faith is tried to see whether it be a saving faith or not. 1 Pet. i. 7. "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If the trial was not of the nature and kind, but only of the *quantity* of faith; how exceedingly improper would be the comparison between the trial of faith and the trial of gold? Another distinguishing scripture note of saving faith is, that it is the *faith of Abraham.* Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the

law, but to that also which is of the *faith of Abraham*, who is the father of us all." Now, the faith of Abraham cannot be faith of that degree of which Abraham's was; for undoubtedly multitudes are in a state of salvation, that have not that eminency of faith. Therefore, nothing can be meant by the faith of Abraham, but faith of the *same nature and kind*. Again, another distinguishing scripture note of saving faith is, that it is faith *unfeigned*. 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of *faith unfeigned*." 2 Tim. i. 5. "When I call to remembrance the *unfeigned faith* that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Now this is an epithet which denotes the *nature* of a thing, and not the degree of it. A thing may be *unfeigned*, and yet be but to a *small degree*. To be unfeigned, is to be really a thing of that nature and kind, which it pretends to be; and not a false appearance, or mere resemblance of it. Again, another note of distinction between saving faith and common faith, plainly implied in scripture, is, that it *differs* from the *faith of devils*. It is implied in James ii. 18, 19. "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works, show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: *the devils also believe*, and tremble. Here it is first implied, that there is a *difference* between saving faith and common that may be shown by *works;* a difference in the *cause*, that may be shown by the *effects;* and then it is implied, this difference lies in something wherein it *differs* from the *faith of devils;* otherwise there is no force in the apostle's reasoning. But this difference cannot lie in the degree of the assent of the understanding; for the devils have as high a degree of assent as the real Christian. The difference then must lie in the peculiar nature of the faith.

§ 50. That the difference between *common* faith and *saving* faith does not lie in the degree only, but in the *nature* and *essence* of it, appears by this; that those who are in a state of damnation are spoken of as being wholly destitute of that sort of faith which the saints have. They are spoken of as those who *believe not*, and having the gospel hid from them, being blind with regard to this light; as 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which *believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Now, can these things be said with any propriety, of such as are lost in general, if many of them as well as the saved, have the *same sort* of faith, but only in a less degree, and some of them falling short in degree, but very little, perhaps one degree in a million? how can it be

proper to speak of the others, so little excelling them in the degree of the same light, as having the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining unto them, and beholding as with open face the glory of the Lord, as is said of all true believers in the context? while those are spoken of as having the gospel hid from them, their minds blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them, and so as being lost, or in a state of damnation? Such interpretations of scripture are unreasonable.

§ 51. That the difference between saving faith and common faith is not in degree, but in *nature* and *kind*, appears from this; that, in the scripture, saving faith, when *weakest*, and attended with very great doubts, yet is said *never to fail*. Luke xxii. 31, 32. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith *fail not;* and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The faith of Peter was attended with very great *doubts* concerning Christ and his cause. Now, if the distinction between saving and other faith be only in the degree of assent, whereby a man was brought fully to assent to the truth, and to cease greatly to question it; then Peter's faith would have failed. He would have been without any saving faith. For he greatly questioned the truth concerning Christ and his kingdom, especially when he denied him. Other disciples did so too; for they all forsook him and fled. Therefore it follows, that there is something peculiar in the *very nature* of saving faith, that remains in times even of the greatest doubt, and even at those times distinguishes it from all common faith.

§ 52. Saving faith does not consist only in the difference of *effects*. The supposition that I would *disprove* is this, that there is no difference between saving faith and common faith as to their nature; but all the difference lies in this, that in him who is in a state of salvation, faith produces *another effect;* it works another way; it produces a settled determination of mind, to walk in a way of universal and persevering obedience. In the unregenerate, although his faith be the *same* with that of the regenerate, and he has the same *assent* of his understanding to the truths of the gospel, yet it does not prove effectual to bring him to such a resolution and answerable practice. In opposition to this notion, I would observe,

1. That it is contrary to the reason of mankind to suppose different effects, without any difference in the cause. It has ever been counted to be good reasoning from the effect to the cause; and it is a way of reasoning to which common sense leads mankind. But if, from a different effect, there is no arguing any difference in the cause, this way of reasoning must be given up. If there be a difference in the effect, that does

not arise from some difference in the cause, then there is something in the effect that proceeds not from its cause, *viz.* that diversity; because there is no diversity in the cause to answer it: Therefore that diversity must arise from nothing, and consequently is no effect of any thing; which is contrary to the supposition. So this hypothesis is at once reduced to a contradiction. If there be a difference in the effect, that difference must arise from something: and that which it arises from, let it be what it will, must be the cause of it. And if faith be the cause of this diversity in the effect, as is supposed, then I would ask, What is there in faith, that can be the *cause* of this diversity, seeing there is no diversity in the faith to answer it? To say that the diversity of the effect arises from likeness or sameness in the cause, is a gross and palpable absurdity; and is as much as to say, that difference is produced by no difference: which is the same thing as to say, that nothing produces something.

2. If there were a difference in the effects of faith, no difference in the faith itself, then no difference of faith could be showed by the effects. But this is contrary to scripture, and particularly to James ii. 18. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." The apostle can mean nothing else by this, than that I will show thee by my works that I have a *right sort* of faith. I will show thee that my faith is a better faith than that of those who have no works. I will show thee the difference of the *causes*, by the difference of the *effect*. This the apostle thought good arguing. Christ thought it was proper to argue the difference of the *tree* from the difference of the *fruit;* Matt. xii. 33. "A tree is known by its fruit." How can this be, when there is no difference in the tree? and if there is no difference in the faith that is the cause, then certainly no difference can be shown by the effects. When we see two human bodies, and see actions performed and works produced by the one, and not by the other, we determine that there is an internal difference in the bodies themselves: We conclude that one is alive, and the other dead; that one has an operative nature, an active spirit in it, and that the other has none; which is a very essential difference in the *causes* themselves. Just so we argue an essential difference between a saving and common faith, by the works or effects produced; as the apostle in that context observes, in the last verse of the chapter:—"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith* without works is *dead* also."

§ 52. There is, in the nature and essence of saving faith, a receiving of the object of faith, not only in the *assent* of the judgment, but with the *heart*, or with the inclination and will of the soul; as is evident by 2 Thess. ii. 10. "Received not

the love of the truth, that they might be saved." And the apostle, describing the nature of saving faith, from the example of the ancient patriarchs, Heb. xi. describes their faith thus, verse 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but, having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and *embraced* them." And so the evangelist John calls faith a *receiving* of Christ; John i. 12. "But as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here, the apostle expressly declares, that he whom he means by a receiver, was the same with a believer on Christ, or one that has saving faith. And what else can be meant by *receiving* Christ, or *accepting* him, than an accepting of him in heart? It is not a taking him with the hand, or any external taking or accepting him, but the acceptance of the mind. The acceptance of the mind is the act of the mind towards an object as acceptable, but that in a special manner, as the act of the inclination or will. And it is farther evident, that saving faith has its seat not only in the speculative understanding or judgment, but in the heart or will; because otherwise, it is not properly of the nature of a virtue or any part of the moral goodness of the mind. For virtue has its special and immediate seat in the *will;* and that qualification, that is not at all seated there, though it be a cause of virtue, or an effect of it, yet is not properly any virtue of the mind, nor can properly be in itself a moral qualification, or any fulfilment of a moral rule. But it is evident, that saving faith is one of the chief virtues of a saint, one of the greatest virtues prescribed in the moral law of God. Matt. xxiii. 23. "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the *law*, judgment, mercy, and *faith:* these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It is a principal duty that God required, John vi. 28, 29. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the *work* of God, that ye *believe* on him whom God hath sent." 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his *commandment*, that ye *believe* on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." And therefore it is called most *holy* faith, Jude 20. But if it be not seated in the *will*, it is no more an *holy* faith, than the faith of devils. That it is most holy, implies, that it is one thing wherein Christian holiness principally consists.

§ 54. An objection may be raised against this, *viz.* that the words, *faith* and *believing*, in common language, signify no more than the *assent* of the understanding. I answer,

1. It is not at all strange, that in matters of divinity and of the gospel of Christ, which are so exceedingly diverse from the

in the Bible; as it makes void the special end of it, which is to teach us the true way of salvation. The gospel is the revelation of the way of life by faith in Christ. Therefore, he who teaches something else to be that faith, which is essentially diverse from what the gospel of Christ teaches, he teaches another gospel; and he does in effect teach another religion than the religion of Christ. For what is religion, but that way of exercising our respect to God, which is the term of his favour and acceptance to a title to eternal rewards? The scripture teaches this, in a special manner, to be saving faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he that teaches another faith instead of this, teaches another religion. Such doctrine as I have opposed, must be destructive and directly tending to man's damnation; leading such as embrace it, to rest in something essentially different from the grand condition of salvation. And therefore, I would advise you, as you would have any regard to your own soul's salvation and to the salvation of your posterity, to beware of such doctrine as this.

END OF VOL. VII.

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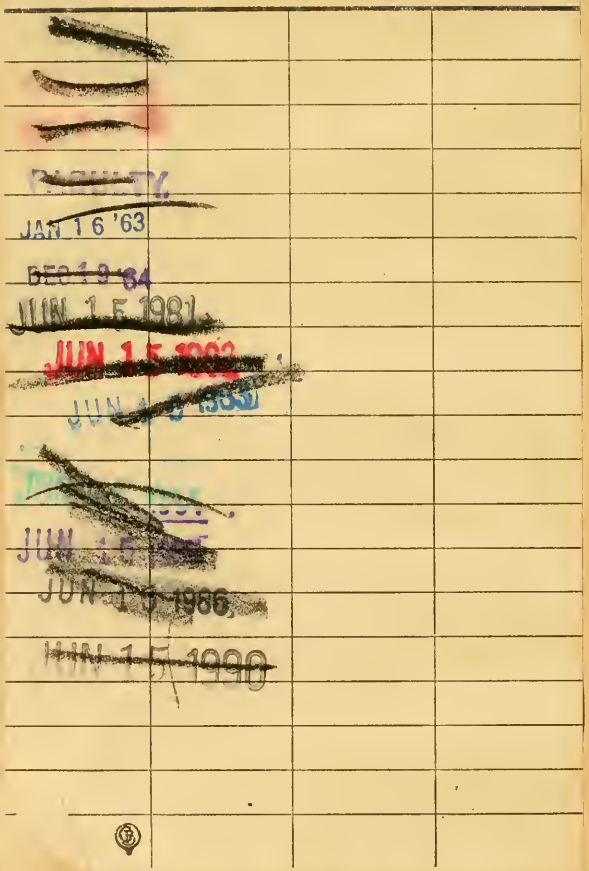

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